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FEATURES

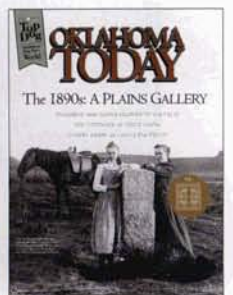
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COLLECT BOTH COVERS!

The January-February 2000 issue has two covers. Wrestler Bill Goldberg—photographed on October 3, 1999, in Oklahoma City—is available on newsstands only. *Oklahoma Today* subscribers received the Plains Gallery cover.



DAVID FITZGERALD



When photographer **Tom Luker** (pictured here with "Chief Red Eagle") first met wrestler Danny Hodge at his home in Perry, he thought he'd offended the former Olympian by asking if he still got down on the mat. "Then he turned his back on me and started clearing the living room," Luker says. "He proved his point for about fifteen minutes." Luker, an *Oklahoma Today* contributing editor, shot the "Legends of the Falls" (page 32) cover story last fall. A sportsman himself, he spends much of his spare time with at-risk kids, and last year he took several on a seven-day camping trip to the Continental Divide in Colorado.

As author and co-author of numerous articles about the Oklahoma frontier, **John Lovett** was familiar with the subject in "Plains Gallery" (page 24). But Andrew Forbes posed an extra challenge for the assistant curator at the Western History Collections at the University of Oklahoma. With very little published information about Forbes, Lovett was left to his investigative and deductive skills to present a snapshot of the pioneer photographer's life. Lovett is an Arkoma native and has been with the Western History Collections for sixteen years.



When **Mike Brake** isn't penning speeches or articles on behalf of Governor Keating (he's been his chief writer since 1995), he might be found in the competition ring with his two cocker spaniel show dogs. Although he admits that his wife Leslie "is the driving force behind the dog showing," Brake doesn't shy away from the sport. In "Best in Show" (page 42), he takes us deep inside the dog show world both in Oklahoma and nationwide. Brake began his writing career with the *Daily Oklahoman* as a crime reporter in the 1970s and has since written for the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, and *Newsweek*.

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FROM THE EDITOR



Dogged

IT'S TRUE. SOME PEOPLE DON'T UNDERSTAND THE JOYS OF OWNING A DOG. You might even be one of them. Such people shrink at the thought of dog hair on the back of a business suit, and they cringe at the idea of a dog sleeping at the foot of the bed. Bless their souls.

I am a dog person. I come from a long, proud line of dog people, my maternal grandmother having been a long-time cocker spaniel breeder and author of a newspaper column about dogs for thirty-six years. My mother—known in her neighborhood as the puppy midwife—has placed the ashes of Tango, our most recently deceased golden retriever, atop the china cabinet in the dining room. Several beloved canines rest in peace in the back yard under the pine tree: Maggie, the two Bucks, Ping (named for the duck on Yangtze River), and several representatives from the cat side of the equation.

For my dad's birthday last month, my sister gave him a plaque saying, "This house owned and operated solely for the convenience of our dog." She was not kidding. That "dog" would be two, in fact: Pie, the German shorthaired pointer who is expected to speak English any day now, and her "sister," Abbey, my golden, now a permanent visitor at Chez Parents (an apartment is no place for a retriever). I can't say I ever read any of Lewis Grizzard's columns, but I remember the day after he died, when a solemn cartoon depicted him before the pearly gates where his beloved black lab, Catfish, sat waiting. That cartoon still gets to me. I am a dog person.

These dogs contribute to an equilibrium in our lives unmatched by human companionship. They mark time with us, standing steadily by during the ups and downs. We know their lowering effect on high blood pressure and about the success of the Eden Alternative—nursing homes where overmedicated loneliness is chased away by a garden full of pets, dogs playing the most significant role.

On page 42, Mike Brake has written a terrific story about the achievements of dog show professionals right here in our state. But there's more to Oklahoma's canine subculture. Countless organizations devote their energies to finding good homes for abandoned pets, groups like Yukon's Pets and People Humane Society. Since 1992, the rescue volunteers have found good homes for more than 13,000 animals—242 last September alone (www.petsandpeople.com or 405/350-7387). Paws with a Cause, a personal favorite of our advertising account rep Gina Stanley, trains shelter dogs for people with disabilities. Though they may lack pure-bred genes, these dogs have no shortage of wagging tails.

For some tail wagging of our own, *Oklahoma Today* won the Folio Editorial Excellence award for best regional magazine last October (other winners include *Travel & Leisure* and *Cigar Aficionado*). Congratulations to my brilliant team of editors and contributors, and thank you for all the hard work. It's paying off.

EDWARD A. MCCUNE



Nine-year-old Abbey prefers tennis balls to rawhide, and back seats to back yards.

Laura McCune
mccune@oklahomatoday.com

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LETTERS

A Monk in Full

I cannot put into words the delight that I feel when I open a new edition of *Oklahoma Today!* My great-aunt Florence Frank of Oklahoma City found the perfect Christmas gift. It is especially nice, since we now live in Kansas, that we get a little bit of home seven times a year.

I was surprised when I opened the November-December issue to find another relative featured in the splendid article, "A Monk's Life," by Kathryn Ledbetter.

Having grown up seeing some of Father Gerrer's sculptures on tables and paintings hanging on the walls at my grandmother's house, I think that I had a distorted perspective of how fantastic a person he really was. I had grown up all my life hearing stories about him from my grandmother and her sisters, all nieces to Father Gerrer. According to these relatives, the magnificent Pope Pius X portrait was his greatest accomplishment. It turns out that his greatest accomplishment is still being given to the people of Oklahoma through his lifetime of work at St. Gregory's.

I can't wait to see what is in January's issue; hope I can wait that long. (Did you ever think maybe, just maybe, a monthly?)

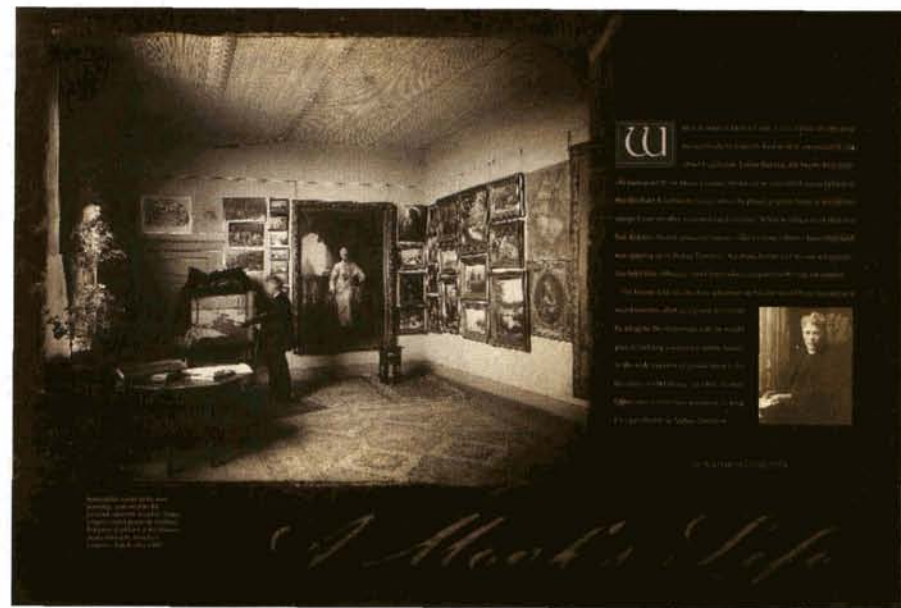
Thank you, *Oklahoma Today* and Aunt Florence.

Phil Braniff
Derby, Kansas

I believe my son's (Phil Braniff) comments speak for all of us in my family. We are very delighted with the article, "A Monk's Life."

I am the great-nephew of Father Gregory Robert Gerrer, O.S.B., and I know St. Gregory's very well. I spent quite a few hours visiting with Father Gerrer at his place of business—"the museum" that he is known for so well, as portrayed in the article.

I thank you for your outstanding publication, the splendid article, and last but not least, that my aunt, Florence Frank, has seen fit to send your *Oklahoma Today* not only to me, but also to my children and my cousins and their families each year at Christmas. Our children are



in Kansas, Minnesota, Ohio, and Louisiana, besides Oklahoma.

We, the Gerrer, Maney, Holden, and Braniff families, have a colorful family history here in Oklahoma, and I was so pleased to see an article about Father Gerrer.

Thank you, *Oklahoma Today*.

John P. Braniff Sr.
Oklahoma City

Thank you for your excellent "A Monk's Life" article on the art of Father Robert Gerrer O.S.B. at St. Gregory's in Shawnee.

In years past, I spent many happy days on retreats at St. Gregory's, and I always enjoyed Father Gerrer's art hanging in the abbey and in the quite excellent museum.

Lyell H. Carver
Grover Beach, California

Good Eats

The response to the "Home for the Holidays" (November-December) article has been great. I have heard so many compliments from friends and cooking class participants. It has been a very positive experience and an honor to be included in the story.

I thought the cover was striking—definitely eye-catching. The whole story was interesting to read and had a nice warmth to it. And in the photographs we were all smiling—it must have been all that good food.

Sara Eason Branscum
Oklahoma City

Memory Lane

The September-October issue of *Oklahoma Today* with the Across the Range story "Ding! Ding!" brought back memories of my childhood when I rode the streetcars and interurbans. How I loved to ride them.

I spent much of my life in Oklahoma. I graduated there, married there, and our son was born there. When *Oklahoma Today* arrives in my mail, it's time to stop and read it and go back and read some more.

Keep up the good work.

Margaret Blazer
Glendale, Arizona

Wright's Still Right

The article on the Price Tower ("Biography of a Building," November-December) by George Lang was so well done, and J.D. Merryweather's photos were outstanding.

We appreciate the time and effort that went into this publication.

Carol Wofford
Executive Director,
Price Tower Arts Center

Where?

I was surprised that *Oklahoma Today* had moved Frank Lloyd Wright's masterpiece, Fallingwater, from Bear Run, Pennsylvania, to Bull Run, Pennsylvania. I trust it withstood the trip without incurring any new cracks.

Clark D. Chapman
Bartlesville

In researching the error you point out, we discovered a more dubious situation at hand. No, not only is Bull Run not the location of Fallingwater, it appears not to exist, according to both the trustees of Fallingwater—the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, and the local post office in Mill Run. Bear Run, however, is also incorrect: Bear Run is the stream over which Fallingwater hangs. In fact, Mill Run is considered to be the official township associated with the rurally located Fallingwater. We regret the error, due to incorrect information provided to our fact-checking staff.

Corrections: In the November-December Market Place on pages 12 and 13, we misspelled the last name of Ryan Fossett (not Fawcett). He is the owner of Enid Floral.

Oklahoma Today welcomes the views of readers. Letters are subject to editing and must include name, address, and a daytime phone number. Send letters to: *Oklahoma Today*, Attn. Editor, P.O. Box 53384, Oklahoma City, OK 73152 or fax to (405) 522-4588. Address electronic mail to letters@oklahomatoday.com.

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By Jennifer Breedlove

KNITTING 101

From needles to skeins, S.W.A.K. is a knitter's paradise.



Back to Basics

"Kids who can read this book can knit," says thirty-one-year-old Keely Stuever, dispelling the myth that knitting is just for grandmothers. *Kids Knitting*, \$17.95.



Spinning a Yarn

From inexpensive, ordinary yarns to specialty imported yarns, S.W.A.K. offers something in everyone's price range. From back left: Scottish Shetland wool by Alice Starmore (\$5.60 per skein), hand-dyed mohair by Colinette Yarns (\$21.50), New Zealand wool by Jo Sharp (\$6.50), hand-dyed Qiviut 100 percent musk ox hair by Moco Yarns (\$70), and nylon Techno-Hair by Gedifra from Italy (\$8.95).



Stately Knit

No, Stuever won't sell you this Oklahoma-inspired sweater—one of her own designs—but you can buy a kit with everything you'll need to make the sweater yourself (except the buttons, but Sealed with a Kiss has those too). \$120 per kit.

Oh, Baby!

"Everyone loves this sweater!" says Stuever. This popular baby design is even softer than it looks, and it should only take a few weeks to make. Depending on size, \$21-\$40.





Care Bears

A quick and easy project, this kit contains a bear pattern, the wool and stuffing, and a birth certificate. If the finished bear is returned to the store and added to the highway patrol's donation basket (for a program that gives stuffed animals to children during family crises), Stuever will give you back a free skein of wool. Bear kit, \$9.95.



Hair Wear

Though it looks like the Muppet that got away, this sweater is made from Techno-Hair, a popular new microfiber from Italy. Feather-light and delicate to the touch, this material is surprisingly durable. \$80.

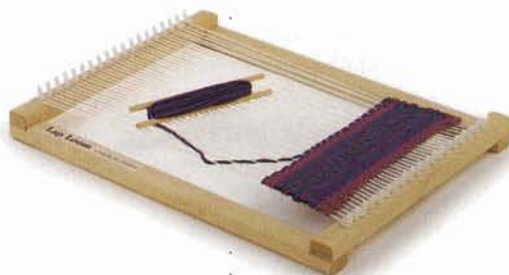


Head Gear

Just one of several hat patterns available at Sealed with a Kiss. Stuever says this multicolored hat is *trés* simple. \$23.40.

In a Haystack

While any old pair of needles will get the job done, these wooden needles from Japan add a little style to the task. On the left, 14-inch birch needles by Brittney, \$5.90; on the right, 12-inch bamboo needles from Crystal Palace, \$8.50.



Looming Near

Not everything at S.W.A.K. is exclusively for knitting. Various crafting tools like this loom are also available, Stuever says, and they're fun for enthusiasts of any age. \$39.95.



MEET THE DESIGNER

Keely Stuever

Many people who walk into Guthrie's Sealed with a Kiss for the first time browse through the displays of specialty yarns, knitting needles, and patterns and then point to one of the display sweaters hanging throughout the store. When the browsers find out the sweaters are just pattern samples that are not for sale, they want to know how much it would cost to have co-owner Keely Stuever make one for them.

"A lot of people don't understand that it's not about the sweaters," says Stuever, describing the intangible connection most knitters have with their projects. "The fun part is the knitting." The sweater is just a nice byproduct.

This thirty-one-year-old Lawton native is on a mission. Along with her business partner and mother Sherry, she wants people to understand the passion that drove her to leave a corporate job as an accountant and make a business out of what most people consider a hobby. "Knitting appeals to young, educated people because it requires mental activity," Stuever says.

In just three years, her store has become central Oklahoma's one-stop shopping center for knitters. But more than just a needle and yarn gallery, S.W.A.K. is the means by which these two women hope to change the usual perceptions of knitting. Says Stuever, "It's not just a hobby for grandmothers."

—Jennifer Breedlove

Sealed with a Kiss at 2022 West Noble Avenue in Guthrie is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday and 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Thursday. The shop also has a web site at www.swaknit.com, though most customers prefer to browse the web site and then buy in person at the shop. (405) 282-8649.

Once in a Wildlife Time

Watching Tulsa's Billy Darnell

TWENTY-FOUR-YEAR-OLD BILLY DARNELL, president and CEO of Zoobee Watches, gives Oklahoma much of the credit for his success. Born and raised on a large plot of land in Tulsa, the Holland Hall graduate raised horses and cared for a menagerie of cats and dogs, many of which he adopted from the local SPCA. "My mom raised my sisters and me on an acreage," Darnell says. "So there were always animals around."

A nature lover too, he spent scads of time playing in the creeks and woods near his home. Despite this affinity for animals and nature, Darnell knew at a young age that his calling wasn't caring for animals—he wanted to be an entrepreneur.

At nineteen, before he was even a freshman at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Darnell started his own business designing watches. He saved more than \$1,500 in graduation money from family and friends and used it to have forty watch samples made in Tulsa. He then convinced Art Wolfe, one of the world's best-known wildlife photographers (whose work has been featured on the covers of *National Geographic* and *Life*), to provide the photos for the watch faces. Meanwhile, Darnell managed to get the attention of a

major watch manufacturer (who wishes to remain anonymous) and convinced the company to produce his whimsical timepieces.

Since Darnell launched Zoobee two years ago, the Colorado-based company has caused quite a stir, both nationally and internationally. "A man in Japan recently bought a Zoobee watch for one of his kids and is very interested in selling Zoobees overseas," says Darnell.

Darnell's Zoobee web site includes a kind of Zoobee "curriculum" and education center—animals of the month compete with puzzles and contests for web browsers' attention. "I created the web site partially because I wanted to get away from being so sales driven all the time," he says.

One final indication that Darnell is as interested in the animals as he is in making money—he donates one percent from the sale of every watch to the Wildlife Conservation Society.

—Priscilla Monhkern

More than 120 styles of Zoobee watches can be purchased online at www.zoobee.com or through mail order (\$30, plastic; \$50, nylon band). Select department stores nationwide also carry Zoobees. (800) 815-1306.

Red Dirt Gardens: Pruning Season

Winter is a great time for pruning plants. I say this not because winter is the "correct" time to prune plants—I'm of the school that says plants can, for the most part, be pruned at any time of year—but because it is easier to see the inherent architecture of deciduous plants after the leaves have fallen.

The number one rule in pruning is to respect the natural architecture of the plant. Too often landscape shrubs are contorted into geometric forms never seen in nature, and end up looking as if they've been dropped from space. Also, steer clear of topping off crape myrtle shrubs, focusing your shears three feet or so from the ground. Crape myrtle is such a beautiful plant not only when in flower, but also when pruned to

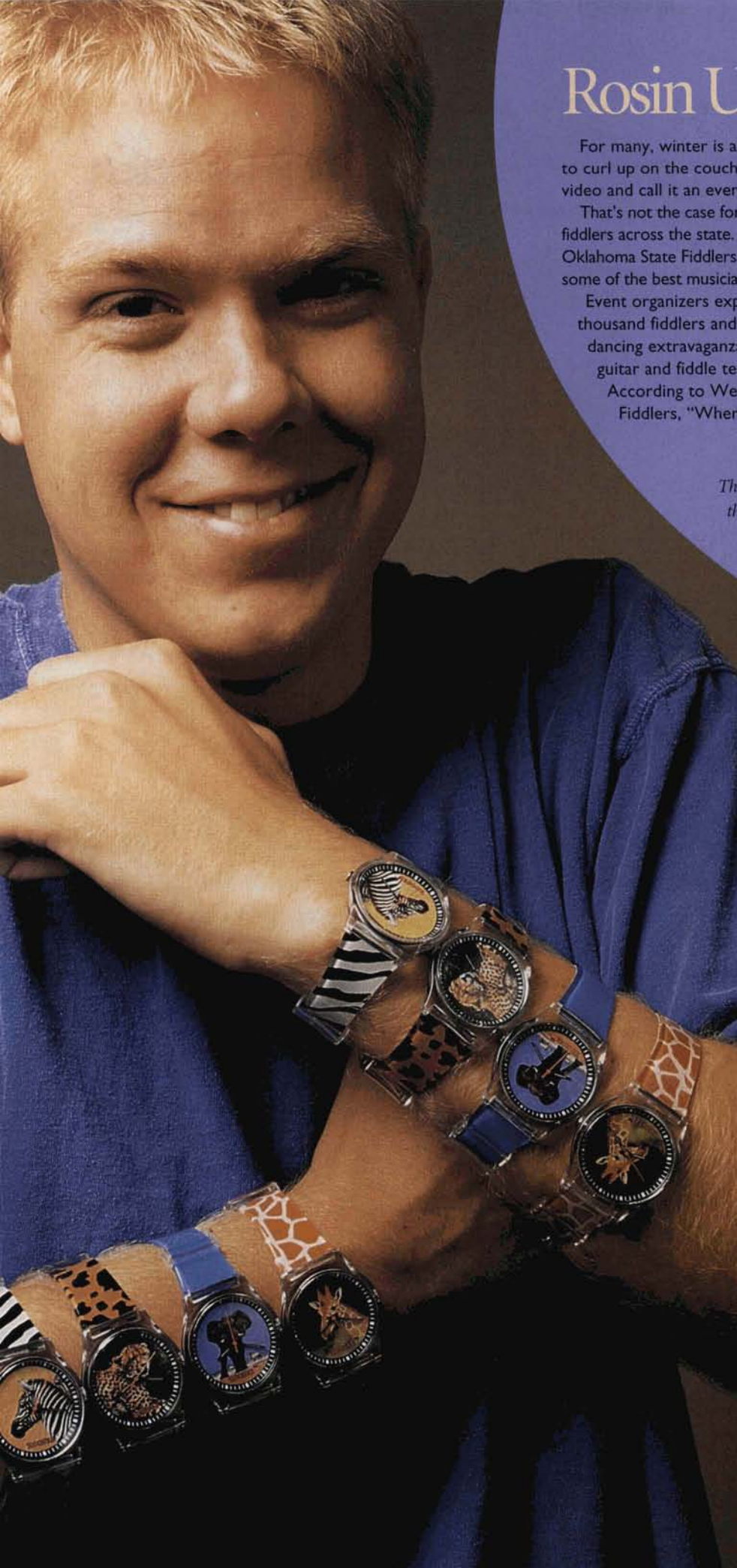
accentuate the upright stems and their mottled bark. It's a good idea to remove the flower clusters once they have bloomed if you desire a later flush of flowers, but do not cut stems larger than your finger.

Recognizing and accentuating the natural architecture of landscape shrubs will lengthen their season of interest, for they have a beauty all their own—even in winter.

—Lou Anella

For gardeners more interested in houseplants during the winter, the Omniplex in Oklahoma City is hosting a Clean Air Plants exhibit January 10 through February 21. (405) 602-6664.





Rosin Up Your Bow

For many, winter is a time to hibernate at home. A time to curl up on the couch with a good book or pop in a video and call it an evening's entertainment.

That's not the case for music-loving, feet-stomping fiddlers across the state. In fact, the twenty-ninth annual Oklahoma State Fiddlers Convention is sure to pull in some of the best musicians from all over the region.

Event organizers expect a crowd of about two thousand fiddlers and non-fiddlers at the three-day music and dancing extravaganza. "It's just a big jam session," says Jim Garling, guitar and fiddle teacher at the Double Stop Fiddle Shop in Guthrie. According to Webb Tipton, vice president of the Oklahoma State Fiddlers, "Wherever there's a nook, there'll be some jammin'."

—Jennifer Breedlove



DAVID G. FITZGERALD

The Oklahoma State Fiddlers Convention will be held at the Western Hills Guest Ranch on State Highway 51 in Wagoner. (405) 321-8164. For more information about the Oklahoma State Fiddlers and the convention, call Ginger King at (918) 789-3850.

Alt-Almanac

GENERATIONS OF FARMERS AND ranchers have used almanacs as a reference tool ever since Benjamin Franklin's alter ego emerged in *Poor Richard's Almanac* in 1732. Today, the popular *Old Farmer's Almanac* is still based in New England, but calculations must be adjusted for the distance between Oklahoma and the East Coast, making errors possible.



Having made the mistakes himself, Brett Elliott of Norman created a local version of the well-known almanac, the *Oklahoma Farmer's &*

Rancher's Almanac (\$2).

His version combines "generations of folklore" with scientific tables specifically for use in the Sooner state. Adjustments are now made in minutes instead of hours because the calculations center on Oklahoma City instead of New England.

—Melinda Long

To order, call (405) 366-1944 or log on to www.members.aol.com/okalmanac. Elliott's e-mail address is okalmanac@aol.com.



Heartfelt Messages

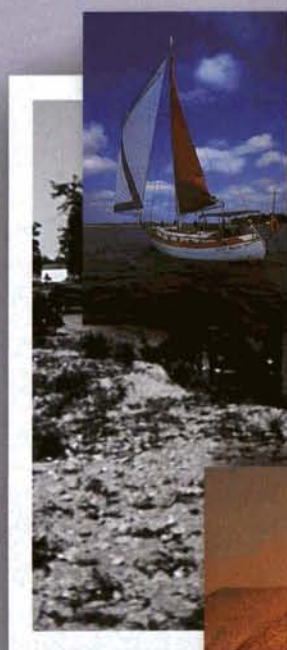
Postmarked with Love

FOR MORE THAN THIRTY years, Virnitia Simpson postmarked perfumed love notes and sugary letters as postmaster of the Loveland Post Office in Tillman County. When Simpson retired in 1998 at age fifty-eight, she wondered if her Cupid's work would continue.

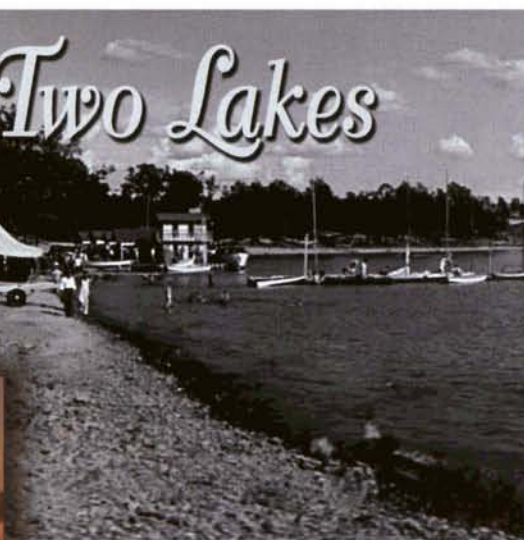
No one knows when the practice started, but clever suitors with amorous intentions began routing affectionate letters and notes through Loveland, population twelve. Lovers and friends would receive cards postmarked "Loveland." After a few years, Simpson

Loveland is located southwest of Lawton, just north of the Red River.

STEPHEN HOLMAN/TULSA WORLD



A Tale of Two Lakes



ACROSS THE RANGE

designed a heart-shaped stamp with the inscription, "Valentine Greetings from the Heart of the Big Pasture."

"It was busy work, but I enjoyed doing those valentines," says Simpson, who was carrying on a tradition started by her deceased mother-in-law, Lydia Simpson. Lydia was the Loveland postmistress from 1926 to 1968. The valentine mail, which usually contained a few marriage proposals, would fill up four-foot-tall postal sacks. The sacks meant long hours of sorting and stamping by Simpson and her mother-in-law.

U.S. postal workers don't always have a very positive image, but that wasn't the case in Loveland, where two dedicated women worked anonymously, stamping bright red hearts on five hundred to five thousand valentines each year in addition to handling their regular mail duties.

The Loveland post office was actually a converted garage attached to Simpson's



house. When it closed a year ago, the family had overseen the postal goings-on there for more than seventy years.

N.O. Slack, Simpson's friend and postmaster of Grandfield, the next town over, carried the Loveland torch in 1999. The current postmaster of Grandfield, David Carpenter, plans to take over this year

while Slack is on leave. "A lot of people have asked us about it," says Carpenter. He says his office will continue stamping the Valentine's Day mail as long as the letters continue to come in.

Virnitia Simpson is thrilled. "So many people have asked me about it," she says.

Lucie Williams from Altus, who has sent valentines to friends through Loveland for ten years, was moved by the news. "I have a lot of friends in their eighties, and no one remembers these little ladies," Williams says. "They are just tickled to death to receive these valentines with red hearts on them."

—Omer S. Gillham

For the Loveland postmark, put your stamped, addressed valentine inside an envelope marked Postmaster of Grandfield, Oklahoma, Post Office, 73546-9998. Make a notation on the exterior envelope requesting the Loveland postmark. (580) 479-3155.

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and into the new year, enjoy a stay in one of Edmond's luxurious hotels or bed and breakfast when you plan an evening of entertainment.

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ARENA CROSS NATIONAL Jan. 14 - 16 At the Lazy E Arena, (405) 283-7433

SYMPHONASAUROS Jan. 16 Central OK Concert Series—A humorous combination of music & storytelling, (405) 340-3500

TAP DOGS Jan. 18 Tough, rocking theatrical entertainment that turns tap dancing upside down. Live from Broadway, (405) 974-3375

BULLNANZA Feb. 4 - 5 See the greatest bull riders in the world at the Lazy E, (405) 282-RIDE

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Standing the Test of Time

The Marrying Tree of Garfield County

A LONG U.S. HIGHWAY 81 NORTH OF Hennessey stands a lightning-ravaged, disease-eaten, storm-worn old cottonwood tree. It's certainly not much to look at. Its beautiful crown was taken out years ago by lightning and wind, and passing motorists barely notice its few remaining branches as they speed by. But this ancient tree has a story much more majestic than its frail, aging frame suggests.

The tree stands a few feet north of the Kingfisher and Garfield County line, also the dividing line between the unassigned lands of central Oklahoma and the Cherokee Outlet during the land run of 1889. At one time, the tree provided settlers the only shade around. A few years later, the tree witnessed the greatest horserace in history during the land run of 1893 for the settlement of the Cherokee Outlet.

These days, most passersby don't know how much history the tree has survived. But by locals, it is known simply as the Marrying Tree. Until 1974, when a couple got a marriage license in Oklahoma, they had to be married in the same county in which they obtained the license.

But not every couple knew this. Several times couples got their licenses in Enid, located in Garfield County, and then had their weddings in Hennessey, which is in Kingfisher County. Often the minister wouldn't discover the mistake until the ceremony had actually begun. Generally the ceremony would still be held in the church or home as planned. Then the minister, bride and groom, witnesses, and anyone else who wished to attend would go three and one-half miles north of Hennessey to the Garfield County line and have a legal wedding under this cottonwood tree. Depending upon the weather and the time of year, some of the ceremonies were performed in a car, maybe even a buggy.

In 1997, on their fortieth wedding anniversary, Delano and Sylvia Copeland's children and grandchildren decorated the tree with yellow ribbons and a sign

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Under the Marrying Tree, untold numbers of couples have wed.

proclaiming it the site of their marriage. The couple had made the common mistake of planning their wedding in a different county than the one their marriage license was from.

The Copelands had their wedding ceremony in the First Baptist Church of Hennessey on March 8, 1957. "We didn't know we had to get the license in Kingfisher County," Sylvia says. "Delano and I, along with the minister and our wit-

nesses, loaded up and went to the county line. There, under the branches of the Marrying Tree, we held another ceremony of I Do's." The couple keeps a piece of bark from the tree hanging in their home as a reminder of the unusual start they had together.

—Lee Briix

Lee Briix has been teaching U.S. history at Hennessey High School for thirty-two years.

Like a HAWK

Who is behind Oklahoma's newest publishing venture, HAWK Publishing?

A clue—the law is no stranger, but its mysterious ways have become this author's best friend. Puzzled? So were noted author and crossword aficionado William Bernhardt and his wife, Kirsten, when faced with the mystery of why so many beloved books are shelved by publishing houses after their initial releases.

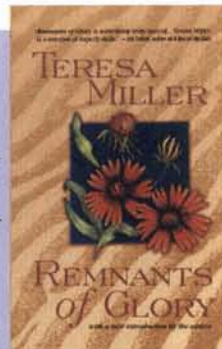
Although all of Bernhardt's twelve books are still in print, he often hits a roadblock during research or when trying to track down the works of his expanding circle of writer friends. "Once sales drop below a certain level, it becomes financially unfeasible for large publishers to keep the book in print," says

Bernhardt, who is published by Ballantine.

HAWK Publishing (hawkpub.com or 877/429-5782) hopes to solve that problem by publishing both new works and resurrected ones. Its first reprinted books—*Old Fears* by John Wooley and Ron Wolfe, *Remnants of Glory* by Teresa Miller, and *The Code of Buddyhood* by Bernhardt himself—hit national bookstores, as well as Amazon.com, in November. Future releases include *A Bus of My Own* by Jim Lehrer and Will Rogers; *The Cherokee Kid* by David R. Milsten.

Kirsten, who serves as editor in chief, is carefully tackling the stacks of manuscripts arriving weekly at HAWK Publishing, currently housed in practically every room of the Bernhardt home. Kids Harry and Alice are happy to share space and time. After all, they lay claim to the first two letters of the company name.

—Sheilah Bright



Visit Norman

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The nationally renowned Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History



The OU marching band entertains a sellout crowd of over 74,000 Sooner fans.

Known for its progressive style and stature, the city of Norman boasts sights and sounds for everyone as the third largest city in Oklahoma. Founded in 1890, the University of Oklahoma is home to top-notch academic and collegiate sports programs. Norman is also home to the nationally renowned Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History. Plus, Norman is rich in Oklahoma history and boasts homes and sites that have stood since the turn of the century.

As a city with a variety of activities offered throughout the year, such as theatrical productions, music and year round festivals, we welcome you to Norman and hope you enjoy your stay. With all the attractions to see in our city, the sooner you get here, the better.



Click on www.ncvb.org or call 1-888-310-4523 for the latest up to date information on the City of Norman.



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J Mays, designer of the "new" Volkswagen Beetle and the upcoming Ford Thunderbird

Car Talk

AVIATION PIONEER WILEY POST isn't the only innovator to emerge from Maysville, Oklahoma. Count J Mays among that elite club of hometown boys who've gone on to change the way we view the vehicles around us.

Anointed by *The New Yorker* as "an international design star," the forty-five-year-old former OU student is responsible for the enormously popular, reincarnated Volkswagen Beetle. Now, as vice president of design for Ford Motor Company, he is about to roll out his interpretation of the ever-classic Thunderbird. Says *Time*, Mays is "leading a crusade to make the automobile matter again."

Anyone who has sat in the front seat of the updated Beetle knows the exact level of design genius that went into its making. From the chrome interior to the bud vase, the car is a driver's dream.

"We went to the city and checked it out when it first came in," says Jo Frances, Mays's proud mother, who drives a new Ford Explorer. "It's just a darling car." A car that Wiley Post—the first to fly solo around the world—would surely be proud of.

—Louisa McCune

Success by Chocolate

IF THERE IS ONE THING MOST OF US can agree on, it is that chocolate is an essential part of life. With the annual world consumption of chocolate estimated at about 600,000 tons and rising, it's clear that a market for the cocoa bean is always on the horizon. Take Annie Alison's Chocolates in Yukon, for instance.

Small, with only a painted window for recognition, Annie Alison's is almost lost in its roadside strip shopping center. Yet inside this unpretentious little shop, some of the finest truffles around take form. From traditional dark chocolate and hazelnut to more exotic flavors like orange burst, German chocolate, snickerdoodle, and white chocolate amaretto, Annie Alison's offers more than a dozen different truffles designed

to make your mouth water.

Lisa Linder, a native Oklahoman, and Annie Erichsen, a transplant from Iowa, are the forces behind Annie Alison's. While Linder oversees marketing and retail sales, Erichsen is in the kitchen, dipping about one hundred pounds of chocolate a week while developing new tantalizing flavors.

—Terri Queen



Annie Alison's Chocolates, 706 South Ranchwood in Yukon, is open 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Tuesday-Friday and noon to 4 p.m. on Saturdays. (405) 354-9800 or (877) 354-9800. Chocolates cost about \$1 per truffle or \$12.89 per one-pound box (sixteen truffles). Expect a retail markup when purchased elsewhere.



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Broken Arrow	El Reno	Guymon	Okmulgee	Sand Springs (Tulsa Area)	

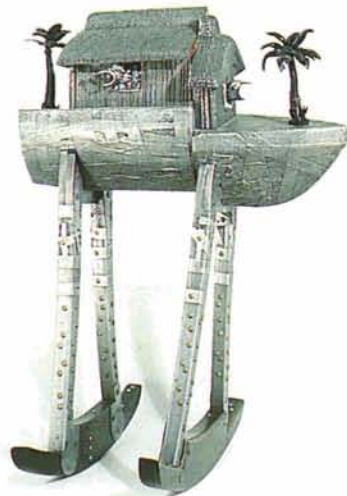
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This OSU professor prefers his chairs in need of repair.



LETTING GO OF THE WRY CYNICISM that has typified his art for the last decade, sculptor David Roberts has rediscovered the joy of old-fashioned craftsmanship. Meticulously painted furniture now replaces etched and painted steel and aluminum ships.

Like most artists, he considers his work his obsession, not his career. At fifty-three, the Kentucky-native is an associate professor and sculpture teacher at Oklahoma State University, where he has worked since 1973.

Roberts finds the furniture for his artwork at local antique shops, in trash cans, and in alley ways. He then disassembles it and repairs any broken pieces. Roberts believes that during the process of stripping, sanding,

and refurbishing, the object is shorn of its previous life. It is only then ready for his painstakingly detailed designs of meandering vines and multicolored dots. Even the areas covered

by padding and the undersides of the furniture are meticulously painted.

Originally, Roberts started with a single chair that now has become an entire husband-and-wife seating ensemble, including a wooden table (decorated with the artist's own pipe ashtray and crystal ball), a lamp, and a rocking chair for his wife, Sharon. While Sharon's rocker is more flamboyant than Roberts's own chair, both were put through the same labor-intensive, old-fashioned preparation and decoration process.

Stately elegance and idealized domesticity now characterize Roberts's style—illustrating how the artist has mellowed with his new art form. "Everything I've done since I was a student is self-portraiture, autobiographical," Roberts says.

The dots and vines in his work are indicative of his love of nature, he explains, surrounded by the remote, picturesque

landscape of his Glencoe home.

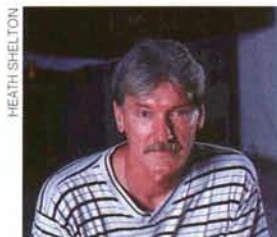
"In the furniture, I am referencing nature directly," he says. "Vines are all around us out here. They wrap around trunks and branches in the same way they traverse the wooden furniture that was, after all, once part of a tree. Painting the meandering vines and endless dots is a slow process, but it is a mesmerizing, tranquil act."

Roberts's latest project is a wooden couch from a secondhand store, fresh from two months of repairing and restoring.

He upholstered the cushions with apple-green chintz fabric, echoing the color of the vines painted on the wooden surface. A restored starburst clock from the Sixties is ready for painting and will likely become

part of the couch ensemble. Perhaps, Roberts says, the clock is a reminder that whatever is worth doing is worth the time it takes to make it perfect.

—Marcella Sirhandi



HEATH SHELTON

Though several pieces of David Roberts's metal and abstract artworks are in the permanent collection at Omniplex, his furniture art currently can be seen only in his Stillwater studio upon appointment. (405) 744-5858.



OSU professor David Roberts has taken a new approach to his sculpture, abandoning metalwork for pointillistic chairs and tables. Looks can be deceiving: these chair and tables are "not functional," he says.

The OKT Profile: Mitsuye Conover



Mitsuye Conover's creative approach to teaching history at Bartlesville High School earned her the honor of being named Oklahoma's Teacher of the Year in 1999. Here, the inspired mind of our state's top educator offers insight on everything from childhood influences to some of the state's best barbecue.

Q Who or what inspires you?

A Students who are eager to learn.

Q Who were your childhood heroes?

A Ted Williams, the Boston Red Sox player who won the Triple Crown in 1947.

Q If you could change something about yourself, what would it be?

A I would become more left-brained.

Q What is your favorite quote?

A "Far and away, the best prize life offers is the opportunity to work hard at work worth doing."

—Theodore Roosevelt.

Q Your favorite book?

A *The Good Earth* by Pearl S. Buck.

Q When you're not working, what are you doing?

A Reading, scrapbooking, walking.

Q Where is your favorite place to eat in Oklahoma?

A Barbecue places like Mac's in Skiatook, Bad Brad's in Pawhuska, Cotton-Eyed Joe's in Claremore, and Dink's Pit in Bartlesville.

Q What's your perfect weekend?

A Visiting antique stores.

Q Whose opinion do you most value?

A My husband, Neal.

Q If you weren't a teacher, what career would you like to pursue?

A Antique dealer.

Q What do you remember most about your favorite teacher?

A She treated me as an individual, she was caring, and she made me feel special.

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WEEKENDS

FROM ANGUS TO ANTIQUES

By Dana Garrett

TRAFFIC ON THE CHISHOLM TRAIL PROBABLY wasn't as heavy as it is on U.S. Highway 81, its modern-day replacement. But don't be fooled by the fast-food joints and strip malls cutting through the seemingly endless miles of Angus ranches surrounding Duncan. Look deeper, and you'll find a charming enclave of antique shops, tearooms, and specialty stores, the whole town dotted with green parks and homages to pioneer history.

Duncan was established when William Duncan, a tailor at nearby Fort Sill, built a store supplying riders on the Chisholm Trail, the primary route on which cowboys drove their cattle

from Texas to markets in Kansas in the late 1800s. By 1892, enough people had settled in the area that the Rock Island Railroad built a station there, and the town was formally incorporated on June 27 of that year.

After the cowboys left, the oil men came in. Oil was discovered in the area in 1918. Six years later, Erle P. Halliburton established the New Method Oil Well Cementing Company, now Halliburton Energy Services, an international corporation. The

This view of Main Street in downtown Duncan looks a little different today: the Penny Farthing Antique Mall sign now hangs inside the building that now houses the Antique Mall of Duncan.

headquarters, located in Duncan for decades, have been moved to Houston, but the company is still Stephens County's largest employer, with fourth-generation workers on staff today.

Halliburton's history is closely tied to Duncan's. When the company laid off around 2,500 workers in the early 1980s, the downtown area almost died. Most of the shops were boarded up, and no new businesses came in. Today, Main Street looks and feels like it must have in the early 1900s, thanks to a near-total revitalization effort in the late 1980s. Two working soda fountains gush, and specialty shops sell pewter figurines, gospel music, and religious-themed items. Two stores deal exclusively in cheerleading paraphernalia, and a colorful array of hand-stitched jockey silks are available at Victory Silks and Tack. Antique shops (enough to give Duncan the nickname Antique Capital of Southwest Oklahoma) displaying gorgeous furniture and esoteric knickknacks line the street.

Just strolling down Main Street is a lesson in Duncan history. Cement steppingstones which distinguish the wide sidewalks are engraved with events that shaped Duncan—a cyclone destroyed nearly half the town in

1898, the first automobile appeared in 1908, and notorious gangster Pretty Boy Floyd is said to have hidden out there in the 1930s. Some stones are memorials to family, friends, and Duncan High School classes of old.

Today's Duncan High students—and most of the town's 22,000 residents—spend their fall Friday nights cheering on the Demons, one of the best 5A high school football teams in the state. Years ago, you might have spotted actor/director Ron Howard or recently deceased songwriter Hoyt Axton in the stands—both were from Duncan. Outdoor activities are everywhere as Duncan boasts fourteen parks and four lakes. Centennial Park has a playground specially designed for disabled children, and Kiddieland Park, in the center of town, features an old-fashioned gilded carousel with beautifully detailed horses.

Two museums offer glimpses into Duncan's past, the On the Chisholm Trail Museum (580/252-6692) and the Stephens County Historical Museum (580/252-0717). The Chisholm Trail museum offers interactive exhibits including audio-visual clips of movies and television shows about the trail like *Rawhide* and John Wayne's *Red River*.

Cultural activities for the whole family take place throughout the year including outdoor concerts with the Chisholm Trail Municipal Band and the annual Heritage Days Celebration in June. The Duncan Arts Guild puts on workshops and exhibits by local artists year-round. In January and February the Duncan Little Theatre presents *Pruning the Family Tree*, a comedy by Oklahoma playwright Dan Gordon.

The interior of the Cedar Street Grill, originally a 1930s grocery.

BOB'S CATFISH

Old Highway 81 and Refinery Road. Open 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday-Thursday, and until 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Catfish is their specialty, but Bob's also serves burgers, burritos, and chicken. (580) 439-5639

CEDAR STREET GRILL

1001 West Cedar Street. Open 10:44 a.m.-6:44 p.m. (really) Monday-Saturday. A local hangout serving ribs, barbecue, and pizza. (580) 252-6540

EL PLACIO

1209 Bois D'Arc. Open 11 a.m.-9 p.m. daily. Authentic Mexican cuisine. (580) 252-1314



On the Chisholm Trail by Paul Moore was dedicated April 25, 1998.

WHERE TO STAY

LINDLEY HOUSE B&B

1211 North Tenth Street
(580) 255-6700

This English country-style estate has three cottages—each supplied daily with fresh flowers and chocolates. The Rose and Trails End Cottages run \$110/night and the Honeymoon Cottage is \$150/night. Closed for renovation until May 2000.

CHISHOLM SUITES HOTEL

1204 North U.S. Highway 81
(580) 255-0551

Newly-built hotel with complimentary breakfast, pool, and fitness center. All suites have kitchens and fax/modem data ports. Rooms range from \$60-\$108/night.

HOLIDAY INN

1015 North U.S. Highway 81
(580) 252-1500

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PLAINS GALL

The photography work of Andrew Alexander Forbes in the Western History Museum is a research cornerstone in Oklahoma's settler history.

By John Lovett



During the Oklahoma Land Run of 1889, a settler-entrepreneur set up this open-air coffee stand and sold a cup for ten cents. Not only were these settlers enjoying their coffee, they were also posing for a photograph. Much like children in developing countries today, it was considered prestigious during this period to be in a photograph, regardless of whether the participants ever saw the finished print. When a photographer set up his or her equipment, he could count on the cooperation of large numbers of people to pose for an image. Forbes easily could have traded his services for coffee and food.

ERY

Collections remains



Andrew Alexander Forbes was born in Ottawa, Wisconsin, in 1862. That much we do know. We don't know, however, where or when the photographer learned his trade. But the images which remain from his vast body of work indicate that he was certainly a skilled craftsman. Leaving behind a visual legacy of cowboys in western Oklahoma and the Texas Panhandle, Forbes will always be considered by researchers the first and perhaps premier documentarian of settler life on the early plains.

Like most traveling photographers who came into Oklahoma Territory following the land runs, Forbes's photography studio was self-contained in his wagon. This mobility enabled him to literally track down his potential market. Everything he needed—



Above, this image is one of remarkable clarity and detail. When a contact print is made from the original glass-plate negative, it appears that the image could have been taken recently rather than a hundred years ago. The composition also contributes to its superb quality. From the Hispanic cook working at the tailgate of the chuck wagon to the cowboy holding up a piece of food for his friends' amusement, it is a scene referred to continually by researchers.



Above right, at some point during his stay in Oklahoma Territory, Forbes made this image of a cotton yard with the bales ready for shipment. Both the location of the town and the purpose of the large building—probably a courthouse or hotel—are unknown, but most likely this cotton yard is near a railroad. The photograph is common for this period; officials would hire photographers to record scenes such as this for use in town brochures designed to attract settlers and businesses.



Left, Forbes marked this negative with the brand JJ before he made prints. As with most traveling photographers, he hoped to make maximum profit from a single glass-plate negative. A group scene of cowboys such as this could be very profitable for him, especially if each of the men bought one or two prints. The cowboys are around a chuck wagon with their bedrolls nearby; the clothes of each are the same—a wide brim hat and long sleeve shirt with a vest. The brand the cowboys rode for originated in 1880 by the Prairie Cattle Company of Edinburgh, Scotland, and ran in Oldham and Hartley counties in the Texas Panhandle.

Right, when Forbes made this horse herd image with the two cowboys and the young boy, he could never have known he was creating a historical document that would be used by hundreds of researchers. This photograph is unique to the collection because it is of a horse herd or remuda. Cowboys and cattle make up the majority of the range cattle images in the holdings of the Western History Collections. Of course the cowboys are photographed with their individual horses, but a scene such as this one is unusual. It is unfortunate that Forbes did not indicate the location; however, he did scratch the brand into the emulsion of the glass-plate negative.



Bottom left, Forbes photographed this scene of two young women at the boundary marker for northeastern New Mexico and Colorado at what would later become the Oklahoma Panhandle. As is the case with all of the Forbes photographs, the two women are not identified. Also a mystery is the choice of location—whether Forbes or the women made the selection. At the right of the image, the women have placed their sunbonnets on the ground. It is also likely the women rode to the location, because the horse in the background bears a two-horn sidesaddle, used by women riders of the period.



Below, Forbes probably found this family soon after they had established their sod house homestead following either the run of 1889 or 1893. The women of the family put on their best clothes for the portrait and stood in front of their sod house with the dogs, cats, and rain barrels all part of the image. This photograph would become an important family heirloom, passed down through many generations. For his work this day, Forbes may have received cash payment, but often his remuneration was simply a meal with the family.



from his camera and glass-plate negatives to chemicals, paper, and card stock—was conveniently stashed in the wagon.

The main focus of Forbes's work in the region is on cowboy scenes, though other images include settlers, Oklahoma City soon after its establishment, Sac and Fox Indians, and railroad construction in Oklahoma Territory. After his approximately eight-year stay in the region, he moved West and settled in Bishop, California, where he had a studio for several years.

Andrew Alexander Forbes died on March 21, 1921. In the late 1960s, his widow and son donated ninety-seven glass-plate negatives and thirty of his original prints to the Western History Collections of the University of Oklahoma. As Oklahoma enters a new era, Forbes's sobering and sweeping images from centuries past will surely remind all who see his work just how far we have come.





BACK IN 1994, WHEN I WAS PUTTING THE FINISHING touches on *Oklahoma II*, I discovered that I lacked any snow scenes in each of the landscapes I was working with. I made all kinds of excuses to my publisher: "This is not Colorado," or "It's been a very dry, warm winter," or "Oklahomans would be shocked to see snow in a book about their state." My publisher would buy none of my excuses—there had to be a snow scene in the book. I called Gary England at Oklahoma City's KWTU, the weather man who had assisted me in the past with predicting various days of sun, rain, and storms. He said he would help if he could, but it was already late February; soon enough it would be spring. But on March 8, I received an urgent call from England telling me to leave as soon as possible for Blaine County, that this might be my Kodak moment.

Instant Snow

THE STORY BEHIND THE PICTURE • BY DAVID FITZGERALD

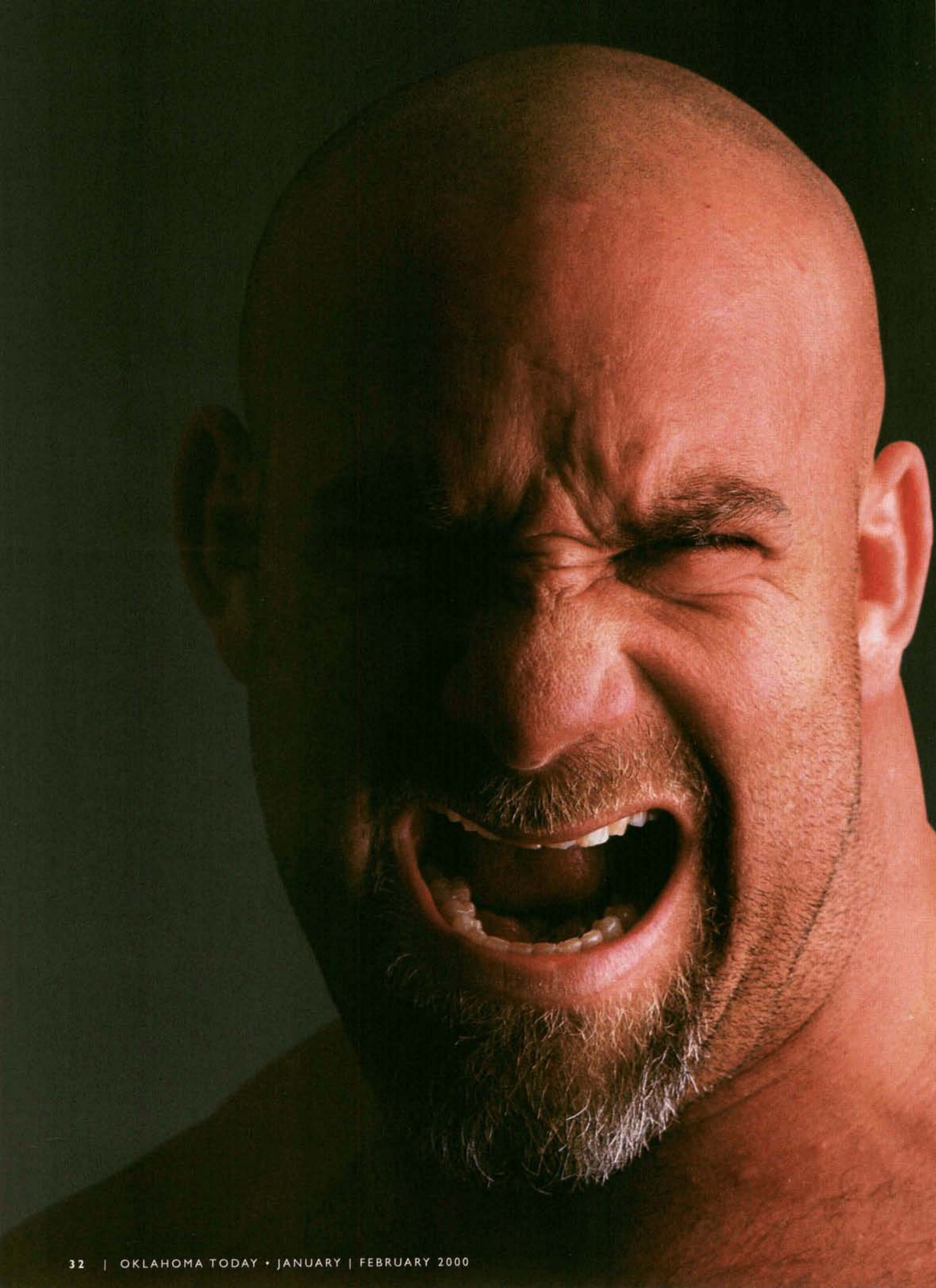
Pulling out the map, I set a course straight for Watonga and Roman Nose Resort Park. By the time I reached the lodge, Blaine County was in the midst of a full-blown blizzard, and by ten o'clock that evening the snow measured eighteen inches. Truck drivers, whose rigs had been stranded on the highway, were brought in by large four-wheel drives. The vantage from my second-story room extended just five feet from the balcony.

At dawn's break the next morning, the Jeep and I cut deep trails in the fresh snow while seeking that perfect spot. Carrying a tripod, film, two Hasselblad cameras, and probably five lenses, I trudged through thigh-high snow a quarter of a mile to the Spring of Everlasting Waters. At the very moment I arrived, the clouds overhead parted, and a warm sun emerged. And just as I finished photographing this wonderland great pieces of it began to release from the branches and fall—this beautiful moment was disintegrating right before my eyes.

It was now ten in the morning, and there was hardly a sign that just twelve hours earlier I could not even drive, much less see Roman Nose Resort Park. By five o'clock that afternoon, it was short sleeves and T-shirt weather. A typical Oklahoma spring snow storm, if I've ever seen one. 

David Fitzgerald has been a contributing editor at Oklahoma Today for twenty-nine years.

The Spring of Everlasting Waters feeds into the lakes of Roman Nose Resort Park near Watonga.



Legends of the Falls

Wrestling—it started out as the real thing, but that didn't always draw paying customers. So at least a century ago, pro wrestling became part athletic exhibition, part theater of the absurd. Then for decades, wrestlers and promoters

maintained that their contests were strictly legit. That all changed in 1984 when the World Wrestling Federation (WWF) labeled its product "sports entertainment." Nowadays live wrestling shows are likely to include more standup comedy than step-over toeholds.

Wrestling used to fill a few odd hours of TV on weekends. Punch the remote now, and you'll find three different companies airing more than a dozen weekly hours of prime-time wrestling. "Business is better than it's ever been," says announcer Jim Ross. In one recent week, seven of the top ten hours of cable TV programming were wrestling shows staged by the WWF or its chief rival, World Championship Wrestling (WCW).

Lucrative spinoffs include magazines, CDs of wrestlers' entrance music (one of which recently went platinum), countless action figures, T-shirts, and other merchandise bearing the likenesses of performers. Beyond all of the ephemera, however, is the most impressive sign of wrestling's entrance into the mainstream American consciousness: on October 19 last year, the WWF took to the trading floor and went public with ten million shares of common stock on the NASDAQ exchange.

From old-time world champ Dick Hutton to current WWF star and former basketball player Paul "The Big Show" Wight, Oklahoma talent has played a big part in wrestling history. We present here only a few of the many Sooner legends of the falls.

In just two years, thirty-three-year-old Bill Goldberg has become the favorite performance wrestler in the World Championship Wrestling circle. Featured on the covers of both *Entertainment Weekly* and *TV Guide*, the former NFL Atlanta Falcons and Los Angeles Rams player is the son of a Tulsa doctor.

By Gordon Grice
Photography by Tom Luker

No Gimmick

IN A PRESSROOM HIDDEN DEEP IN OKLAHOMA CITY'S Myriad Convention Center, I have come to talk to the most imposing physical specimen I've ever shaken hands with. He's six foot four and 285 pounds, his shaved head lending authority to the scowl on his brow. When he takes off his warm-up shirt for photos, he reveals biceps the size of cantaloupes. A wrestling show is getting under way in the arena, and even though he's not scheduled to make an appearance for at least a couple of hours, we can already hear fans chanting his name over and over again: Goldberg.

But Bill Goldberg is not here to talk wrestling. He's come to talk roosters. The Myriad is the latest stop in his quest to make the world a better place for animals. Goldberg and his girlfriend have twenty-four animals living at their house—everything from dogs to miniature horses. ("I've been gone for three days, so God knows how many I've got now," he says.) As a celebrity spokesman for the Humane Society of America, Goldberg has testified twice at congressional hearings on the matter of animal fighting and succeeded in getting many of the wrestlers at his company to adopt abandoned cats and dogs. Last October, he used his wrestling dates in Oklahoma to speak out against cockfighting.

Goldberg grew up in Tulsa, the son of a prominent gynecologist. He played football for Tulsa Edison and spent weekends flying aerobatic planes with his two brothers. In college he studied the martial arts. Eventually he went on to a career in the NFL, but his football days ended when an abdominal muscle was torn so badly it detached from his pelvis. That's when he tried his hand, and the rest of his impressive physique, at wrestling, a decision reflecting "my desire not to wear a suit and tie."

In the gimmick-ridden world of pro wrestling, Goldberg's gimmick is that he has no gimmick. He arrives at the ring dressed in plain black boots and black trunks. His moves, most notably the "jackhammer," showcase his explosive power. "Though it is entertainment," he says, "it's not void of competition."

Goldberg joined the WCW in 1997, and his no-nonsense, tough-guy image caught on immediately. Soon the writers at World Championship Wrestling had him racking up a winning streak in the hundreds. Some seven months after his first official wrestling match, he took the WCW heavyweight title from Hulk Hogan on the nationally televised cable show *Monday Nitro*—the fastest trip to the top in the history of the business and the first title reign for a Jewish wrestler.

Goldberg remains the most popular wrestler in the WCW, one of the good guys in the often ribald world of pro wrestling. A regular guest on *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*, he has made guest appearances on *E.R.* and recently starred with Jean Claude Van Damme in the feature film *Universal Soldier*. He has been featured on the covers of *Entertainment Weekly* and *TV Guide*, to name just a few, and his likeness has been digitally simulated on at least four PlayStation and Nintendo video

games. As far as contemporary popular culture goes, Goldberg is at the top of the heap.

After the press conference, he dressed for battle. Drawing the biggest crowd response of the night, he dispatched a cowardly giant called Sid Vicious, who was aided by "Dog-faced Gremmlin" Rick Steiner. The match sounds silly, and it was, but it was easy to see why Goldberg is a star. For a few minutes, as he bounced around the ring and growled for the crowd, he made this improbable spectacle seem undeniably real.



Rocco Valentino of Tulsa plays the Oklahoma Pro Wrestling bad guy in the ring, but he has built a strong following nonetheless. To the right is female wrestler Heather Savage—she's Rocco's valet and also part of the VIP clique, Valentino's Important People.

Behind the Mike

HE'S THE VOICE OF THE HIGHEST-RATED WEEKLY SHOW on cable TV. Last year, an action figure in his image was available at stores across the country. His trademark black cowboy hats bring upwards of \$500 at charity auctions, and he ad-libbed his own dialogue in Milos Forman's latest film about comedian Andy Kaufman, *Man On the Moon*. He still reads the *Westville, Oklahoma, Reporter* to catch up on the news from back home.

Jim Ross is the play-by-play announcer for the World Wrestling Federation (WWF). He calls the matches on *Raw Is War*, the company's Monday night flagship show, and hosts a dozen annual pay-per-view specials. Behind the scenes, he's a vice president of the company. Among other duties, he supervises the WWF's talent roster.

"Business is better than it's ever been," says Ross of the company that went public last October. In one recent week, seven of the top ten hours of cable TV programming were wrestling shows





staged by the WWF or its chief rival, WCW. *Raw Is War* held the top two spots, a ranking that translated into seven million viewers. In August 1999, the company launched *Smackdown*, already a ratings winner, on the UPN network. The WWF's TV shows are broadcast in nine languages in 110 countries, and its live events regularly draw sell-out crowds across the United States.

"We're talking about entertainment," Ross says. He's careful to point out that professional wrestling events are staged shows, not legitimate athletic contests. He describes the WWF as "an action-adventure soap opera" with elements of mystery, drama, humor, and satire. But he objects to the word "fake." He says professional wrestlers must have athletic ability and stay in great condition. "Wrestlers are mentally tough—tougher than other athletes," he adds. "They're not pampered, and there's no off-season in wrestling." WWF wrestlers must maintain a training regimen while adhering to a travel schedule Ross describes as "rigorous"—they often perform fifteen to eighteen days a month, with each show in a different city. Their travels sometimes take them to places as far-flung as Japan, South Africa, England, and the Middle East. "It will burn you up," says Ross.

Ross's love of wrestling started in childhood. He grew up in Westville, where his father was a county foreman for the highway department. The Ross family lived in a four-room blockhouse that had formerly served as a milk barn. The house lacked indoor plumbing until the young Ross was in fourth grade. Radio was a big part of the household. Ross listened to sports announcers like Jack Burke and Harry Carey, who brought baseball games to vivid life. "You could see the dirt on the players' uniforms," Ross recalls. "I've always loved that theater of the mind."

In the 1960s, Ross watched the local wrestling promotion on Tulsa's KOTV. "Saturday was a big TV night in those days," Ross says. "It was *Guns, Smoke, Perry Mason*, the news, and then wrestling." Ross became a fan of Danny Hodge, the former Olympian who played the all-American hero, routinely dispatching foes depicted as cheating foreigners.

In his teenage years, Ross didn't limit himself to the local wrestling show. Sometimes he would drive into Tahlequah to watch a cable wrestling program hosted by Gordon Solie, who Ross still considers the best announcer of all time. Solie's style was to play up the athleticism of the wrestlers rather than the often cartoonish aspects of their characters, an approach that would stick with Ross.

In high school, Ross was interested in sports—he wore the uniform of a Westville Yellowjacket in football and basketball—but his favorite activity was Future Farmers of America.

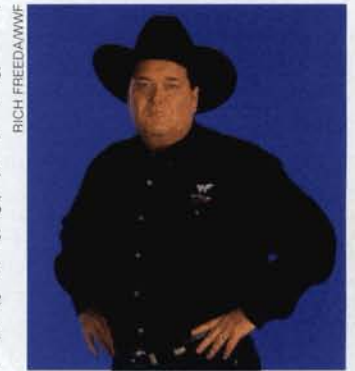
Part Potawatomi and part Creek in real life, thirty-seven-year-old Robert Bush of Coweta plays the role of "Chief Red Eagle" for Oklahoma Pro Wrestling in Tulsa. Bush was recently joined in the ring by his son, Jeremy, a.k.a. "Thunder Wolf"; together, they are believed to be the only Native American father and son tag team in wrestling history. This page, play-by-play announcer for the WWF, Westville native Jim Ross made his ring debut in Tulsa in the 1960s. Now, he's the subject of plastic action figures.

As a junior he was FFA state speech champion. He also served as state vice president of the FFA. His interest in sports and speech carried over to college; after a year at OSU, he transferred to Northeastern Oklahoma State University and majored in physical education and speech. At NEOSU, where he was on the dean's list, he was active in Phi Lambda Chi fraternity.

It was Phi Lambda Chi that brought Ross into contact with the wrestling promotion located in Tulsa, the same one he'd watched on Saturday nights as a kid. Like many wrestling promotions in those days, the Tulsa outfit worked with nonprofit groups to present wrestling shows as fund-raisers. Phi Lambda Chi sponsored two such shows, and Ross met several wrestlers. Suddenly he could see himself as something more than a fan. Ross left just short of graduation to work in wrestling.

The owner of the Tulsa promotion was Leroy McGuirk, a former wrestler. McGuirk had lost his sight in an accident but seemed to compensate with excellent powers of observation. Ross became McGuirk's driver. "I would listen to Leroy McGuirk and soak up the philosophy and psychology of wrestling," says Ross. He soon met his childhood hero, Danny Hodge. "It was like telling a little leaguer he was going to see Mickey Mantle." Ross performed many duties for the promotion, from buying McGuirk's cigars to writing publicity material. At a certain stage in his wrestling education, McGuirk felt it was time for Ross to get in the ring; he had a lot to learn about the way the theatrical mayhem works. "It's more extemporaneous than John Q. Public would believe," Ross says, dispelling the myth that wrestling matches are scripted. Generally, only the ending is laid out in advance; it's up to the wrestlers to improvise specific moves and holds. Ross had no delusions about his own athletic ability, and he didn't mean to wrestle. Instead, he got in the ring as a referee. That job taught him what he calls "the psychographics" of the business—the way in-ring performers convey a story to the audience.

Ross's big break came one day when he was asked to sit in for an announcer who failed to show up for work. His superiors were impressed with his enthusiastic description of the matches, and he soon found himself in the announcer's chair permanently. When the Mid-South promotion, led by Bill Watts, went national, Ross quickly stood out as the best play-by-play man in the business. His metaphors, flavored with rural Oklahoma, set him apart. A ten-man cage match became "a demolition derby with human bodies"; a rugged wrestler was "tougher than a government mule"; when two wrestlers lacerated each other with chops, Ross observed that they were "beating the leather off each other." "I try to talk about what I grew up with, whether it's backyard barbecues or the apple festival at Stilwell," Ross says. His most famous Oklahoma-ism is "slobberknocker," which translates as "a heck of a fight." Ross admits to lifting that one from coaching legend Barry Switzer.



RICH FREEDMAN



But his skills behind the microphone quickly went beyond colorful catch phrases. Ross's comments somehow lent matches an intensity other announcers couldn't generate. Listening to Ross, viewers could forgive corny story lines. Wrestler Mick Foley, who has played such characters as Cactus Jack and Mankind, admits to planning his moves with Ross's descriptions in mind.

Ross spent five years as the lead announcer with WCW in Atlanta, where he worked that company's first pay-per-view, before moving to the WWF. His dream job in the WWF started ignominiously: he appeared in a toga to call matches at the 1993 Wrestle Mania, the WWF's biggest annual pay-per-view. That was only the beginning of his problems with his new employer. "I had two strikes against me," says Ross. The first was his Oklahoma accent, which didn't fit the company's idea of broadcasting perfection. The other was Bell's palsy, a disorder that paralyzes the nerves in half the face. The cause is unknown, and there's no cure. Ross's first bout with the disorder left his speech slurred and half his face sagging like that of a stroke victim. He was axed from the WWF lineup.

But in wrestling, fiction and reality mingle as they do nowhere else. Ross was soon back on board with the WWF, and sometime later his firing was the basis for a story line, with Ross managing villainous wrestlers and—much like David Letterman with CBS—explaining his vendetta against the company as part of his real-life disagreements with the boss.

That wasn't the only time Ross was asked to drop his role as an objective announcer and play a "heel." He fought a long-running battle with his employers over a plan for him to don a black hat and play a scheming villain called J.R.—akin to the character on *Dallas*. Eventually he did put on the hat—if not his own Okie version of the clichéd character—and now he buys his black hats at Drysdale's in Tulsa. Now, those hand-me-downs bring better than \$500 at charity auctions.

In December 1998, Ross's mother, who still lived in Westville, died. She had always been proud to show her neighbors' children mementos of her son's career, and now she was buried with her son's action figure in her coffin. The Bell's palsy, which had lain dormant for months, struck Ross again, apparently triggered by the trauma. His speech was too slurred for him to work as an announcer. Though he was soon back at work behind the scenes, the illness kept him off TV for months. When he came back to the microphone, he was once again in the role of a heel, managing fellow Oklahoman Steve "Dr. Death" Williams. "The company thought I would be booed," says Ross. Instead, fans were glad to see him back, and his segments of the show drew huge ratings.

He didn't think he'd be physically ready to work as an announcer for the 1999 edition of Wrestle Mania, but a request

from two wrestlers changed his mind. The wrestlers were Steve Austin and The Rock, arguably the two biggest stars in the business. They were scheduled to wrestle each other in the main event and knowing Wrestle Mania would be the company's biggest money card of the year, they wanted everything to be perfect. That's why they asked Ross to call their match. He agreed to be at ringside for that final match only, leaving the rest of the card to other announcers. When Ross made his appearance, more than 30,000 fans stood to applaud him. "You can't believe what an adrenaline rush that is," Ross says. "I'm making a living doing something I damn near would do for free."

Brothers in Arms

OKLAHOMA AGAINST TEXAS MAKES FOR GREAT FOOTBALL, and twenty-five years ago it made for great professional wrestling. On the Texas side were the famous Funk Brothers from Amarillo. Representing Oklahoma were Jack and Gerry Brisco, who had roots in Seminole, Stillwater, and Bowlegs. Unlike a lot of professional wrestling brothers, the Briscos really were blood kin. Both had been star athletes at Stillwater High School; both had gone on to OSU's wrestling program. An illness held Gerry back, but Jack became a national champion.

Leroy McGuirk recruited Jack for his Tulsa promotion. In the late 1960s, the pro stuff looked something like amateur wrestling, and the transition wasn't too hard. Younger brother Gerry followed Jack into McGuirk's outfit, debuting at Cain's Ballroom in Tulsa in 1968. Gerry was named Rookie of the Year, and he soon held titles in places as diverse as Texarkana and Australia. He won the world junior heavyweight title within the National Wrestling Alliance, at that time the largest wrestling organization in the world. Jack also held a string of championships, including the NWA heavyweight title. But many fans remember the brothers' work as a team best. Their feud with the Funks, who were also legitimate brothers, did big business across the country for more than a decade. In Texas, the Briscos played dastardly heels; in Florida, where they had taken up residence, they were heroes. They took the NWA World Tag Team title in 1984.

The brothers now own a body shop in Tampa. Jack is retired from wrestling, but Gerry—known on TV as Gerald—still works with the WWF. Behind the scenes, he's the company's director of international tours, arranging cards in Singapore, the Middle East, Africa, and Europe. On camera, he has a recurring role as a "corporate stooge," one of the boss's flunkies who often gets beaten up by the company's current stars. Of this role Gerry observes, "It takes a good man to beat me, but it doesn't take him long."



Left, twenty-nine-year-old Howard Moore is known simply as Mr. Moore to his first, second, and third grade students at Edison Elementary in Bristow. But every Saturday night he becomes "Big Daddy Moore." Weighing 230 pounds, he's also the current Heavyweight Champion of Oklahoma Pro Wrestling, defending his title weekly at Tulsa bouts. Right, WWF referee Gerry Brisco calls a London match on December 6, 1998.



Tool Time

A MAN HOLDS A PAIR OF HEAVY PLIERS IN ONE HAND. He squeezes. The muscle between thumb and forefinger bulges out like a pecan; the pliers snap. The man opens his hand to show the two severed plier parts in his palm.

The man is Perry native Danny Hodge, and this is no magician's trick; it's a legitimate feat of strength. Hodge was never huge like Bill Goldberg, but he was the strongest man on the roster in his day, and his colleagues knew that if it came to a real fight, Hodge could take any of them.

Hodge began wrestling in the eighth grade. He was a state champion in high school. Right after high school, he tried out for the Olympics and made the team, competing at Helsinki in 1952 and eventually winning a silver medal at Melbourne in 1956. During his college career at OU, he went undefeated and suffered no takedowns.

After college, Hodge went to work for an oil company, but he missed the competitive life, so he decided to try something new—boxing. With only a few months of training, he tore through his Golden Gloves competition, scoring twenty-six consecutive knockouts on his way to the national championship. He had ten professional fights—and won eight of them—before he decided to try pro wrestling. Like many Oklahoma wrestlers, he got his start through Leroy McGuirk.

His career in wrestling took him around the world forty-five times in eighteen years. Along the way he won world junior heavyweight titles in the NWA and its rival league, the American Wrestling Association. He wrestled the greats of the day, defeating Lou Thesz in front of a crowd of tens of thousands in Tokyo in 1968.

For two and half years he was managed by the aging wrestling legend Ed "Strangler" Lewis. Lewis had Hodge practice squeezing a wooden mannequin's head to maintain his phenomenal hand strength, which he often demonstrated with the pliers-crunching stunt. "I asked him, would I ever lose my strength?" Hodge recalls. "He said, only if you lose faith." Hodge eventually stopped breaking pliers when he cut his hand, but even in retirement (he lists his age as "plenty-nine"), his strength remains startling.

Hodge's career ended with a car accident in 1976 in Louisiana. He fell asleep at the wheel and woke to find himself traveling upside down into the water. He broke his neck. After the accident, he turned his attention to coaching children in his hometown. "I love helping kids," he says. "We take our wrestling serious in Perry," he adds. Perry wrestlers have won thirty-four state championships, among other honors. That's why Hodge can say, "Perry is the wrestling capital of the world."

Opposite, in his prime, Olympian Danny Hodge was possibly the strongest wrestler in his class, known for his ability to snap pliers by squeezing them. Today, Hodge passes the torch to his wrestling students in Perry. Right, once a football and wrestling star at the University of Oklahoma, Bill Watts went on to run wrestling promotions and is now considered the visionary of today's professional entertainment wrestling.

Crowd Favorite

FANS OF TODAY'S ACTION-PACKED WRESTLING SHOWS on TV have Bill Watts to thank. Until the 1980s, TV wrestling consisted mostly of big stars demolishing men known in the industry as "jobbers"—professional losers whose only function was to make the stars look impressive. For matches between stars, you had to attend a live card. Watts changed all that.

Watts wrestled and played football at OU before going pro in 1961 with the Houston Oilers. When he saw his teammate Wahoo McDaniel cash a paycheck for moonlighting as a wrestler, Watts abandoned football and entered the pro wrestling ranks. His weight lifter's physique, unusual in those days, gave him an edge. He was soon traveling the world as "Cowboy" Bill Watts.

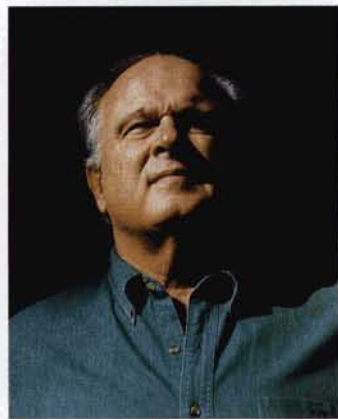
Watts helped sell out the Cow Palace in San Francisco and Madison Square Garden in New York. His match with Bruno Sammartino at the Garden set an attendance record. But not everything was glorious. One night he teamed with Danny Hodge to wrestle a bear for Tulsa promoter Leroy McGuirk. Watts found the bear gimmick embarrassing—it was a hold-over from turn-of-the-century carnivals, not a convincing story for the modern era (bear wrestling has since been outlawed in Oklahoma). To make the bear mean enough to wrestle, its trainer got it drunk with whiskey and Coke. Hodge, a notorious practical joker, enraged the bear by outwrestling it. Then he yanked its hair before tagging Watts into the ring. The bear took its frustration out on Watts, knocking him into the third row.

Watts wanted to be more than a performer. He got his chance in 1970, when he became McGuirk's partner in Leroy McGuirk Championship Wrestling (later renamed Mid-South Sports). "My guys were the toughest in the business," says Watts. Men like Rick Steiner, "Hacksaw" Jim Duggan, and Steve "Dr. Death" Williams all impressed Watts with their toughness inside the ring—and outside. "None of them were allergic to getting into it," he says.

Later Watts branched out, and his Mid-South promotion became the third-largest in the country. Fans today collect videotapes of the Mid-South shows, which they rate as creative high-water marks in wrestling history. One reason for this success was Watts's practice of cramming his shows with main-event matches. Jim Ross, who worked as an announcer for Watts, describes him as a pioneer in "writing episodic TV."

"He was a visionary," Ross says. "This business has gone the way he predicted." □

Contributing editor Gordon Grice's profile of wrestler Mick Foley, a.k.a. Mankind, will appear in *Rolling Stone* in February. Recipient of the 1999 Whiting Writer's Award, he will be a visiting writer at California Institute of the Arts for spring semester 2000.







Best in Show

A step inside the competition ring with Oklahoma's premier handler, breeder, and judge.

By Mike Brake
Photography by David Fitzgerald

IN 1998, AN OKLAHOMA-BASED COMPETITOR IN AMERICA'S SECOND MOST popular amateur participation sport amassed an astounding winning percentage of .993, achieved national top ten ranking, and received a product endorsement contract that put his handsome face in ads in *People*, *Reader's Digest*, *Smithsonian*, *Life*, and *Sports Illustrated* magazines to name but a few. And no one noticed. There wasn't a single line about him in any state newspaper, and he never appeared on the six o'clock news.

Of course American and Canadian Champion Zindika's Johnny Come Greatly, doesn't grant interviews. As a basenji—an ancient breed of African origin whose ancestors were once prized by the Egyptian Pharaohs—he can't talk. (The basenji is also the only breed of dog that doesn't bark.) Most weeks, Johnny is on the road from Thursday through Sunday, strutting his stuff at dog shows from New York to California. With a five-hundred-dollar stud fee and a coveted reputation as the greatest competitor and walking gene pool in the history of his breed, Johnny has resorted to distributing his favors via a sperm bank for when he's passed on to the doggie hereafter. By late 1999, he was closing in on a record sixty best-in-show titles, and at age five he is contemplating semiretirement. He's already the Mark McGwire of basenjis, but he's not the only major player in the world of dog shows to emerge from Oklahoma in recent years.

Weimaraner breeder Susan Line owns five adult Weimaraner dogs, including the parents of her newest litter of four puppies. Here, Harline's French Kiss—or "Elle" as she's better known—poses with master and pups in Oklahoma City's Heritage Hills.

'That is the most beautiful dog I've ever seen.'

OKLAHOMA? DOG SHOWS ARE SUPPOSED TO BE FOR effete Eastern snobs who cuddle and pamper and powder prancing little poodles, not for real men and women from horse and cow country.

"Actually," says Tony Onofrio, "a lot of Oklahomans are doing very well in dog showing these days." As vice president, Onofrio helps operate Jack Onofrio Dog Shows of Oklahoma City, one of fifteen show superintendent organizations recognized by the American Kennel Club as qualified to plan and present a dog show on behalf of local kennel clubs. Last year, the Onofrio organization managed 515 shows in 28 states, processing more than 600,000 entries submitted by handlers, breeders, and owners of dogs from the 156 AKC breeds or varieties recognized for show competition. Oklahoma kennel clubs and breed organizations host 13 all-breed and 28 one-breed specialty shows each year. The 1998 fall Oklahoma City Kennel Club show was among the largest in the nation—larger even than the famed Westminster show in New York: Oklahoma City's show posted 2,007 dogs; Westminster had 1,954.

For 1998, Oklahoma handlers had two dogs in the prestigious all-breed top ten, Johnny and a Maltese from Ponca City, Champion Ta-Jon's Tickle Me Silly, who was then owned and handled by breeder Tammy Simon.

"At Westminster last year, I was told that Oklahoma had the third highest number of entries of any state," says Erin Roberts, Johnny's handler. "That's really remarkable. It says that there are some fine dogs from Oklahoma competing out there, and we have a number of nationally regarded handlers, breeders, and judges."

Actually, dog showing is a natural for Oklahoma and other states with open spaces and lots of sportsmen. The first dog shows were designed to spotlight fine hunting dogs, and careful "form follows function" breeding remains the top priority for those involved in showing dogs. A dog breeder and a quarter horse breeder would understand each other; both know that an animal that looks right and moves right is right.

Of the 1.2 million purebred dogs registered by the AKC each year, only about 20,000 are deemed good enough to vie for their

show championships. Show dogs are judged on conformation—a dog's physical structure, movement, and appearance in line with the breed standard—and on what the dog was originally bred to do. Sporting dogs must be able to hunt and retrieve birds. Herding dogs should have the brains and agility to turn a flock of sheep. Working dogs are expected to be alert or strong enough to guard property or pull sleds. Terriers must be able to flush and catch a rat. Toy breeds, largely regarded as household companions, ought to make a judge smile.

Dog showing is second only to little league baseball in the number of amateur participants it attracts. Unlike other sports, the price of admission to the big leagues—even to the pinnacle of Westminster, the annual "Super Bowl of Dog Shows" in Madison Square Garden—is simply a fine dog and the willingness to work hard at training and conditioning.

"That's one thing that makes it so appealing," says Roberts, who has worked as a professional handler for twelve years. "Anyone can play—young, old, the owner of one dog or a kennel operator with generations of show champions. And if the dog is good, anyone can win on any weekend."

Onofrio says spectators and dog lovers are welcome at local shows, which usually charge only a nominal entry fee to non-exhibitors.

"Come on in, pick up a catalog, and watch your favorite breeds show," he suggests. "People who have questions can just stop by the show superintendent's table or ask one of the breeders or handlers." At most shows, spectators are welcome to wander through the backstage grooming areas, where dogs are prepared for their brief moments in the ring. Most show venues are arranged to allow spectators to stand or sit right at ringside, especially during preliminary breed judging. For dog lovers, it's like peeking into the locker room at the Super Bowl or sitting in the dugout in Yankee Stadium.

That's how Roberts launched her career.

"I started going to shows and just watching as soon as I got my driver's license," she says. "Then I got a show dog, and so did my fiancé. His dog won at his very first show." Her former fiancé and now husband (a dental technician) and her two teenage children are still enthusiastic supporters of her handling career, which has twice taken her to the exalted group ring at the nationally televised Westminster show and made her one of America's most respected dog show professionals.

For pros and weekend amateurs alike, a dog show is a celebration of man's oldest animal friend and a chance to meet spectacular dogs—from Afghan hounds to Welsh corgis. At a recent Oklahoma show, a couple who had wandered into the fairgrounds exhibit building in search of a nearby antique auction were transfixed by the Irish setter judging. One nationally ranked competitor, a glorious dusky red bitch, gaited regally around the ring at the end of her handler's thin lead, her flowing coat streaming, head up, covering ground in a smooth, effortless glide like the hunter she was bred to be.

"That," whispered the male spectator, "is the most beautiful dog I've ever seen." Indeed.

Erin Roberts with five-year-old Champion Johnny Come Greatly





The Breeder

IF PEOPLE BRED LIKE SHOW DOGS, EVERY PREGNANCY would be preceded by thorough medical exams and genetic tests—for both parents. Ancestors' medical histories would be scrutinized through several generations for ailments like cataracts and arthritic hips. Before the breeding, which would have to be witnessed and duly logged in a record book, observers would measure heads, ears, backs, and legs to verify symmetry. Only handsome, superbly fit males would be permitted to mate with beautiful, athletic females—and half or more of their offspring would still be deemed unworthy to be shown and then packed off to foster homes where they would be loved and coddled but never allowed near a show ring.

It sounds ruthless, but to those who breed championship show dogs, there's a good reason for taking the genetic high road: it improves the breed. It might even save it. When certain breeds achieve overwhelming popularity, like cocker spaniels in the 1960s and Labrador and golden retrievers in the 1990s, the gene

pool carefully sequestered and maintained for show breeding can literally salvage the breed from destructive overbreeding for the pet market.

That's important to Susan Line of Oklahoma City, one of the nation's top breeders of Weimaraners. Line Weimaraners have ranked first in the nation twice, in 1983 and 1991, and her scrapbook is filled with photos and ribbons recalling more than forty home-bred show champions.

"I believe in quality control," says Line, who shows her own dogs and works as a veterinary assistant.

Her first Weimaraner was actually bought by her husband, Alan, as a hunting dog, but forty-plus champions later, "He's still waiting for that bird dog." Line fell in love with the breed, a sleek,

At twenty days old, these pups' future is already mapped out: three will most likely enter the show ring and one will be simply a pet.

Made famous by photographer William Wegman, Weimaraners are fast becoming one of the most popular breeds in the country.

mid-sized gray hunting dog described in its AKC standard as “aristocratic . . . friendly, fearless, alert, and obedient.” She bred that first bitch to a Weimaraner who was then the nation’s number one sporting dog. Soon she was winning back-to-back best-in-show ribbons with a pair of littermates.

“They do become your best friends, especially when you breed them and bring them into the world,” Line says. Many of her Weimaraners wind up as cherished family pets. “What makes a good show dog—the ability to interact with people, good health, and a desire to please—also makes a good family pet. A dog’s show career is short, but most of all you want it to have a long and happy and healthy life.”

Line, who won the breed competition at Westminster in 1990 and 1991, remains a small, if select, breeder, with one new litter every three or four years. She’s also proof that it doesn’t take vast wealth or connections to bigtime professional handlers to do well as a breeder and handler.

The Handler

AFTER SHE CONDUCTED A JUDGING SEMINAR IN HOUSTON, Erin Roberts was listening to one judge rave about the wonderful basenji she had seen at a recent show.

“I know,” Roberts smiled. “I handle that dog.” The judge was apologetic about forgetting her, but Roberts took her omission as “the best compliment I’ve ever been paid. A handler’s job isn’t to be a star or to stand out. We’re supposed to be the backdrop. The fact that that judge looked at us in the ring and remembered the dog and not me means I was doing my job.”

Roberts has no idea how many miles she’s driven in her Ford van during two decades in the dog show world. Most weeks she sets out from her home on Thursday or Friday to reach a week-

‘What makes a good show dog also makes a good family pet.’

COURTESY OF ERIN ROBERTS



Roberts and Johnny at Westminster

A DOG SHOW PRIMER

At a conformation dog show—whether all-breed or a single breed specialty—dogs are first judged against the standard for their particular breed, and then against each other according to their strengths.

The first and most important step in judging is at the breed level. Dogs and bitches of the same breed (or variety—some breeds are subdivided into varieties by color, size, or coat variations) are judged separately, first in classes (puppies, open, bred-by-exhibitor, etc.). Winning dogs and bitches from each class advance to the winners dog and bitch competition, where the all-important championship points are awarded to the top dog and bitch. To “finish” or achieve the title of champion, a dog or bitch must amass at least fifteen points, including two major wins.

The winners dog and bitch then advance to best of breed or variety judging, where they confront “specials”—dogs that have already finished their championships. Here, judging combines the two sexes to pick the best example of the breed or variety present at that day’s show.

The breed/variety winners next advance to group judging. The AKC divides its 156 recognized breeds into seven groups—sporting, non-sporting, working, herding, terrier, toy, and hound. Finally, the seven group winners advance to best-in-show judging, where one dog is ultimately chosen as the only undefeated dog at that show.

National rankings are determined by the total number of opponents a winning dog defeats—or “goes up over”—from show to show. A best-in-show dog technically goes up over every one of the thousand or more dogs entered in a show from all breeds. In 1998, two Oklahoma dogs were in the national all-breed top ten.

Other dog show events include obedience, lure coursing, field trials, agility, and even earth dog competition for those breeds which were originally developed to extract rodents from burrows and tunnels. Many conformation shows host one or more of these specialized competitions as companion events, but the primary focus of most shows remains competition in the conformation ring.

—Mike Brake



end show. After hours on the road, she unloads dog crates and grooming and bathing equipment, cares for the maximum number of six dogs she shows at any one time, rises at five o'clock each morning and stands around on hard concrete exhibit hall floors or beside baking outdoor rings—to show a dog for fifteen minutes. If she's lucky, she wins and advances to group and best-in-show judging.

That's been the norm for Champion Zindika's Johnny Come Greatly, the nationally ranked basenji she's handled to the status of dog show legend. By fall 1999, Johnny had accumulated 56 best-in-show ribbons—the most ever for a basenji. In 1998 alone, he won 145 of 149 breed competitions, 86 group firsts, and 21 best-in-show awards. Johnny is also a three-time winner of his breed's national specialty show, the equivalent of back-to-back World Series triumphs in baseball. And look out, Hollywood, Johnny and Roberts are already being featured in a Pro

Plan magazine ad campaign sponsored by Purina.

"He's probably the best dog I will ever handle," Roberts admits. Johnny is owned by two Texans, but he lives with Roberts and her family in Oklahoma City—along with several retired show champions and at least two family pet dogs. "Johnny is loved," notes Roberts. "He lives in the house with the rest of us. No kennel life for him."

Some handlers reap lucrative rewards for their grueling work. At rates of \$65 to \$100 per show per dog, plus bonuses for wins and travel expenses covered by ambitious owners, a handler with a dozen or more dogs under contract can earn thousands each month. That's not a goal for Roberts, who limits her handling to a few dogs, mostly basenjies, Border terriers, and bullmastiffs.

"Right now I'm just enjoying something few handlers ever get to experience—showing the best example in history of a particular breed," she says. "It doesn't get any better than this."

The Judge

A GOOD SHOW DOG IS PART BEAUTY PAGEANT CONTESTANT, part performer, and part Olympic athlete. Dogs are judged on physical conformation; each breed has a rigid standard that covers size, head and body structure, coat, even the precise location and angle of ears and tail. They're also judged on movement and muscle tone. And when the final cut comes and the ribbons are awarded, it doesn't hurt to be Miss or Mister Congeniality.

How does judge Roger Pritchard do it?

To the uninitiated, ten beautiful poodles or lumbering bulldogs look like ten fine pooches, sauntering and prancing around the ring. In some breeds with narrowly defined size, coat, and color standards, it's difficult for a novice to tell the dogs apart. But to Pritchard, who weekends away from his Shawnee home to judge at least fifty shows a year, the choice is usually clear.

"Most of the time I know who the winner is as soon as I step in the ring," Pritchard says. "The problem is deciding who gets second, third, and fourth. There's almost always one outstanding dog in a field. The thing to remember is that dogs aren't competing against each other. They are competing against the standard. Judges judge the dog to that standard, and the one that meets it most perfectly wins."

Pritchard, a retired school administrator, knows the standards for dozens of breeds like a big-league umpire knows the infield fly rule. He is certified to judge toy and non-sporting dogs along with all but five breeds in the working group. It's hardly an accident that, like most dog show judges, he learned those lessons on the other side of the ring, as a breeder and handler. Pritchard started showing boxers and bulldogs as an eleven year old in 1947 and didn't become a judge until 1971. That half century of experience is invaluable.

"I don't look at who is holding the lead," he says. "When exhibitors pay an entry fee and travel to a show, they are asking for my opinion of their dogs, based on my interpretation of the breed standard." Judges, he suggests, play an often unrecognized role in deciding which dogs will be bred to perpetuate the standard. "The dogs I and other judges put up are most likely to be bred. Breeders like to breed winners."

Judges are hired by show-sponsoring local clubs, which pay their travel expenses and a judging fee, usually from \$350 to \$500 per show. Pritchard says he now limits himself to fifty shows per year. Among his favorites are prestigious annual shows in Burbank and Beverly Hills, California.

Sometimes, he faces a field of outstanding dogs, where the winner is less obvious. At one recent show, he watched forty-one excellent Chinese shar-peis circle the ring. "It was the hardest assignment I've ever had," he says.

So who won?

"Sometimes, it's the dog that looks right at you and says with those eyes, 'Hey, I'm today's winner!'"

Opposite, nationally known dog show judge Roger Pritchard hosts his own mock trial in the Shawnee district courtroom of Judge Eugene Carter. Standing in the witness box is Checkmate's Unforgettable, a.k.a. Julie, a cocker spaniel owned by Shawnee breeders Henry and Lucy Krause. Right, Judge Pritchard names this bulldog "Best of Breed" at the Merrimack Valley Kennel Club show.

'Most of the time I know who the winner is as soon as I step in the ring.'

GETTING THERE

Local Oklahoma kennel and breed clubs hold more than forty all-breed and specialty shows each year. Affiliated kennel clubs in Oklahoma City and Tulsa sponsor annual fall and spring all-breed shows, and other shows are hosted by clubs in Lawton, Enid, Seminole, Muskogee, and Claremore. Specialty shows spotlighting single breeds are often clustered around a weekend of all-breed shows. In most cases, admission is either free or limited to a dollar or two. There are few limits on spectator access, and visitors can enjoy meeting show dogs and their handlers or owners in an informal atmosphere.

For information on Oklahoma shows, contact Onofrio Dog Shows at (405) 427-8181 or www.onofrio.com, or your local kennel club.

CHUCK & SANDY TATHAM





By Robert Henry
Photography by J.D. Merryweather

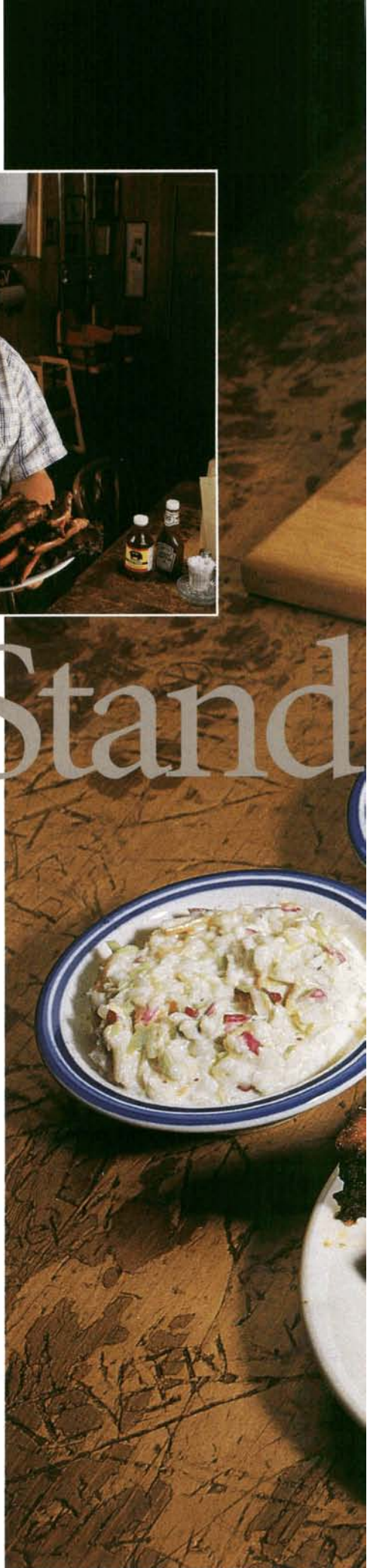


Van's Pig Stand

**For this author, there's no doubt about it—
Van's serves the best barbecue around.**

I WOULD NOT PRESUME TO ANSWER THE PERENNIAL EPISTEMOLOGICAL question of who in Oklahoma produces the best barbecue. Indeed, like the accompanying dualistic problem, beef or pork, the question is, well, unanswerable—lost in a cloud of preferences, prejudices, powders, and pungencies. Bob's of Ada, Leo's of Oklahoma City, Wild Horse in Sallisaw, the once proud Elite in Shawnee (pronounced "ee-light"), and scores of others have their partisans. However, I am prepared to argue and defend to the last bite of sauce-soaked toast that Van's Pig Stand in Shawnee has prepared superb barbecue, beef and pork, and even better steaks, for longer than any restaurant in Oklahoma or Baja Oklahoma as well. And if I were challenged in the debate, I would play my last two cards: Van's bleu cheese dressing on a crisp salad to start and fifty-two-year employee Ralph Williams's secret recipe rum pie for the finale.

Most people enjoy Van's quickly. They may feast on a luncheon platter of barbecued ribs, marvelously fried real potatoes (not some freezer burned chalky former *pommes de terre*) along with baked or pinto beans, toast, and plenty of Van's sauce (which can be purchased there or at Pratt's grocery stores, along with Van's rub). The bill of fare is easily worth the drive to Shawnee. And the "Vanized" baked potato? This double-baked spud flavored with garlic butter and who knows what else is easily the best I've ever consumed. Other patrons with more time and an evening dedicated to gastronomic gusto will go downstairs to the Charcoal Room for a fabulous steak



Really hungry? This combination dinner offers the most meat on one platter and is the largest meal available at Van's. Inset, Self-proclaimed "director of operations, part owner, cook, and dishwasher when I need to be," general manager Denny Sanders has been with Van's Pig Stand for more than fifteen years.



"FIRST, YOU DRINK HALF A CUP OF RUM *so that you won't care how the pie comes out.*"



Ralph Williams's famous rum pie is one of close to fifteen pies served at Van's.

Judge Henry's Version of Van's Famous (and Secret) Rum Pie

- 6 eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 envelope plain gelatin
- 1/2 cup cold water
- 1 pint whipping cream
- 2 tablespoons Myers's Dark Rum
- Grated bittersweet chocolate
- Graham cracker crust
- pie shell (homemade or purchased)

Beat eggs until light; whisk in sugar until dissolved. Soften gelatin with 2 tablespoons of the cold water, then add the rest of the water and boil over low heat or microwave until gelatin is completely dissolved.

Carefully pour hot gelatin into the egg mixture in a stream, whisking constantly to avoid cooking the eggs with the hot mixture. Let cool, but do not let gelatin set. Whip cream until fairly stiff, flavoring with dark rum. Fold and gently stir rum-flavored cream into cooled egg mixture.

Pour into prepared graham cracker crust. Sprinkle generously with grated chocolate. Chill until set, then serve cold. According to Father Mike, the ideal pie should be kept in the freezer and only slightly thawed when served.

cooked over—alas! the almost lost art—a pot of real charcoal. Without exception, this steak—however rare or well-done—should be preceded with bleu cheese dressed salad and concluded with rum pie.

Beginning in Wewoka in 1928 and moving to Shawnee in 1930, Van's originally featured "curb service" (a concept today kept alive by Sonic Corporation, another Shawnee-born restaurant industry). The original menu, with barbecued pig sandwiches selling for fifteen cents, is posted behind Plexiglas at the back entrance. In its current location since 1935, the restaurant evokes a feeling of both hunting lodge and museum. The thoughtful display of Shawneeana includes photos of Shawnee High School cheerleaders, decoupaged tables that preserve ancient initials and graffiti, founders Leroy and Thelma Vandegrift's famous pig collection, and an Oklahoma license plate reading "BAR-B-Q." The public sink with paper towels puts barbecue eaters personally into the cleanup task.

The hominess of Van's is completed by a corner wall that supports a pair of snow skis labeled "Mike, O.S.B." Along with his size fifteen and a half golf shoes, these skis were the prized possession of the late Father Michael Roethler, favorite son of Shawnee, legendary priest, longtime Van's patron, and past president of St. Gregory's University. Father Mike was an apostle of goodwill to all, often proclaiming the joys of Ralph's rum pie, which Mike decreed should be kept in the freezer and just slightly thawed so that the mixture of rum, eggs, and cream maintains an almost ice cream consistency.



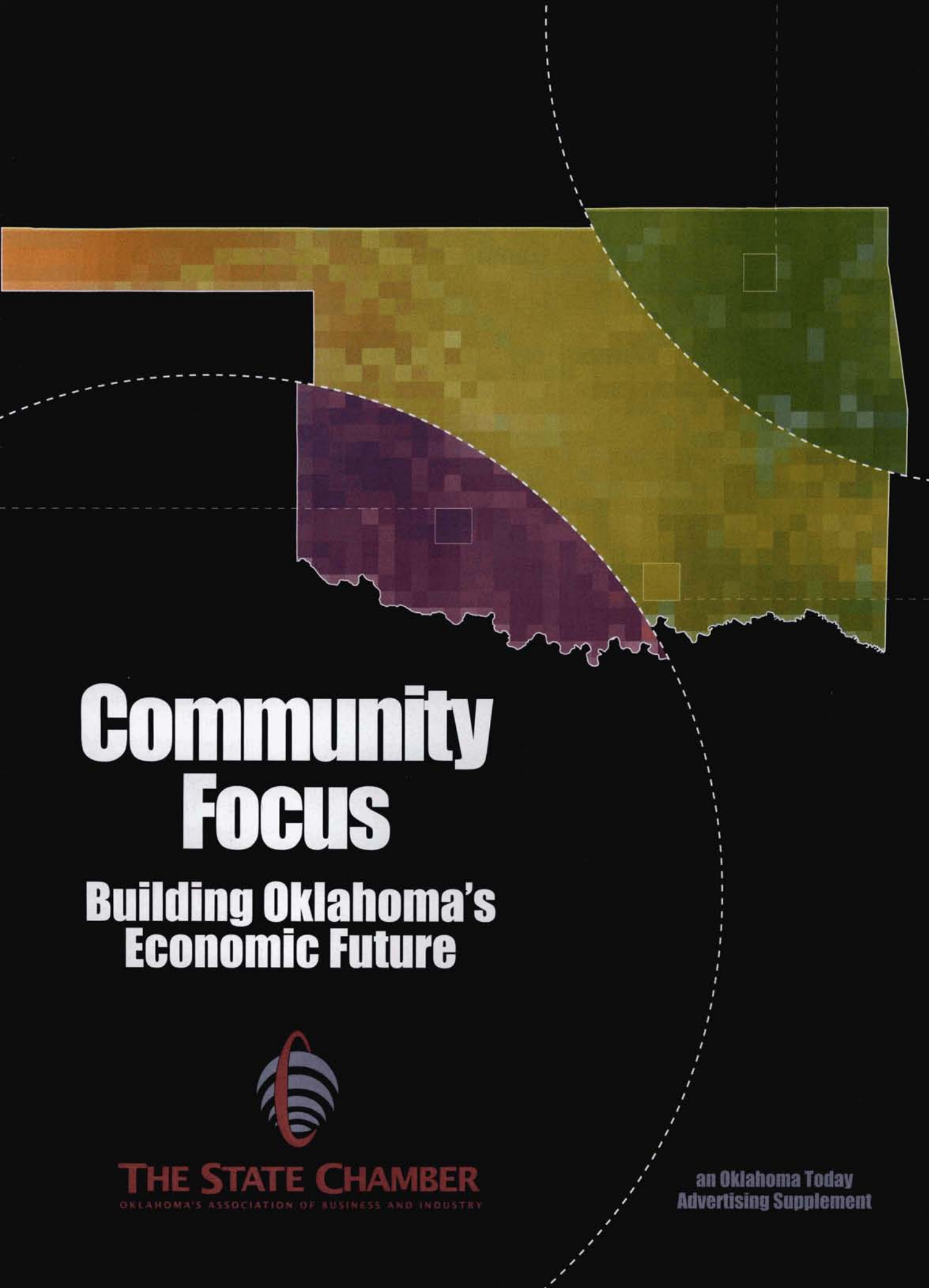
Getting recipes from Van's is not easy. Until his death in 1985, I pestered, cajoled, bribed, spied, and pleaded with Ralph for his bleu cheese dressing recipe. He would tell me, straight-faced, that he had mailed it to me, or that he would send it that afternoon, or that it would be telegraphed, or that he had simply forgotten it. It became our standard joke, and we never tired of playing it. Finally, I decided to shift attack to the rum pie. He said, "Oh, that. I'll tell you the key to that one right now. First, you drink half a cup of rum so that you won't care how the pie comes out." He did tell me one day to use Myers's Dark Rum, and with great hesitation, I offer the recipe here that I came up with after a couple dozen attempts. It's not as good as Ralph's—and even if it were, the pie just tastes better while sitting in a booth at Van's. It is not for everyone; it really does have a strong rum taste.

Owner Jerry Vandegrift now lives in Florida but returns to Shawnee monthly to check in on Van's and St. Gregory's University, on whose board he sits. Jerry knows all the recipes, but he is tightlipped, too. In truth, it wouldn't really matter if I had them. The ambiance and history of Van's Pig Stand is just as much a part of the taste as the essences and esters of the recipes. Van's is an Oklahoma treasure that must be experienced in the flesh, so to speak. Fortunately, the sauce can come home with you. Then you can enter the barbecue wars with a loin up on the competition.

Robert Henry is a judge for the United States Court of Appeals in Oklahoma City. He is a native of Shawnee and lover of great food.



Grab your bib and head out to the original Van's Pig Stand, located at 717 East Highland in Shawnee. Rib dinners cost \$7.75, brisket dinners \$7.50, and signature items like the "Vanized" baked potato and a slice of rum pie are \$1.75 and \$1.95, respectively. Call for hours, (405) 273-8074. Or visit Van's sister location at 320 North Porter Avenue in Norman. Call for hours, (405) 364-0600. The Charcoal Room, located downstairs at Van's in Shawnee, is open 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Weekend reservations recommended. (405) 275-0002.



Community Focus

**Building Oklahoma's
Economic Future**



THE STATE CHAMBER
OKLAHOMA'S ASSOCIATION OF BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

**an Oklahoma Today
Advertising Supplement**

The State Chamber

Unified voice in government aids community growth

It takes two to tango, but it takes 2,000 to tangle with state and federal laws. Changing rules and regulations to help local economies across the state grow requires continual communication and a commitment to delivering a consistent message, according to Mike Seney of the State Chamber, Oklahoma's Association of Business and Industry.

"We can go to legislators and tell

them what the people back home want," Seney said. "But local legislators really need to hear the same story when they go home."

The State Chamber represents more than 2,000 businesses in Oklahoma, and it takes each of those businesses to affect change at the state capitol and in Washington, D.C., Seney said.

"We need each of those 2,000 businesses saying the same thing when they

come home," he said. "When they talk to a legislator, they need to talk not in terms of how a piece of legislation might affect profits, but in how it will affect workers."

Legislators are primarily concerned with maintaining employment levels in their districts, he said. "When a legislator knows that a bill will put 100 people out of work, upsetting 200 voters, they aren't likely to support that legislation."

The State Chamber provides a voice for business in the halls of government, but that voice is only as strong as the members make it, Seney said. Fortunately, Oklahomans aren't known for being shy. Discussion among a variety of community leaders, including Chamber members from across the state, recently led to the passage of a \$1 billion road program for Oklahoma.

"That was created simply because our members out in the state were tired of crumbling roads," Seney said. "You have to be able to get the goods and products out."

While good roads and a stable infrastructure are critical to any state, equally important is the educational level of the workforce. Through its vocational-technical schooling system, Oklahoma continues to make progress in meeting the needs of industry. Vo-Tech schools serve 50 locations in the state. Often, the first glimpse of a new piece of machinery will be on the floor of a vocational classroom. There, the next generation of employee gets invaluable hands-on experience.

The Oklahoma work ethic turns those lessons into positive economic news, but there is much more to the Oklahoma workforce, Seney said. "Yes, there is a strong work ethic, but there's more to it," Seney said. "It's the positive attitude. We're willing to help people. Oklahomans are just good to be around."

Changes in the national economy are providing Oklahoma with a new



set of opportunities. The state's history as a farming and ranching area led to the creation of cities that served as centers for storing grain and selling livestock. Now, those same cities serve as hubs of economic development for the rural areas radiating around them.

"Look on the map, places like Lawton, Altus, Stillwater, McAlester, Hugo, Ardmore, and the list goes on—95 percent of the population of the state lives within 50 miles of one of those hub towns," Seney said. "Now ranchers and farmers have to have a second or third job to keep farming alive. It's very important that these communities remain strong and offer high-paying jobs."

Communities usually need an anchor business or industry to assist the process. For instance, Guymon in the Panhandle has hog production, Enid has wheat and grains, and Bartlesville has Phillips Petroleum and the oil industry, Seney said. Schools, such as the presence of Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, and industrial areas, such as the Mid-America Industrial Park outside of Pryor, also secure a hub city, he added. Once a community finds an anchor, supporting businesses take off.

"It's just like an anchor store in a shopping mall," Seney said. "You have your J.C. Penney's and Dillard's, and then you have all the little shops in between." Like those stores in the shopping centers, the communities in Oklahoma work in a highly competitive marketplace.

Businesses developed in the state, looking to expand or hoping to relocate, factor in items such as the corporate income tax, personal income tax and workers compensation rates when they look at the Sooner State, Seney said. "But there is more to it than that. You have to look at the cost and quality of life," Seney said. "If you are moving here from the West Coast or the East Coast, you will love the cost of buying

'95 percent of the population of the state lives within 50 miles of one of those hub towns.'

a house in Oklahoma. If you are moving to the West or the East, then it's just the opposite."

In the end, the key to the economic future of the state is coordination. "The local community, local Chambers, The State Chamber, the Oklahoma Economic Development Council, they all have to coordinate their message," Seney said. "The state capitol has to hear a unified voice."

Many business executives, especially

small business owners, don't feel like they have enough of a voice at the state capitol, Seney said. But he said their voice is there, they just have to be willing to use it. "In running your business, information locked away in a filing cabinet doesn't do you any good," Seney concluded. "It's the same when you see something you think your legislator should know about and you don't speak up. We can be your voice, you just have to use it."



THE STATE CHAMBER
OKLAHOMA'S ASSOCIATION OF BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

www.okstatechamber.com

330 N.E. 10th • Oklahoma City, OK 73104 • (405) 235-3669

Ardmore

Innovation, location keys to Ardmore's economic success

Straddling a major interstate gives a town an advantage in the economic development arena, but Ardmore offers proof that it is how you use that geographic advantage that matters.

A traditional hub of agriculture and oil and gas production, this south-central Oklahoma town boasts its location alongside Interstate 35 and innovative approaches to winning business in its drive to develop a stronger economy.

"We do whatever it takes to bring in businesses," said Wes Stucky of the Ardmore Development Authority. "Except we won't write checks."

Unlike many of its competitors, espe-

cially those south of the Red River in Texas, Ardmore has been unwilling to sign high-dollar incentive deals to lure businesses to town, Stucky said.

"Some of those communities are simply paying more than the deal is worth," Stucky said. "They're making deals just to announce that they have new jobs. We don't just want 'new jobs,' we want to grow our economic base."

One of the best ways the city of 30,000 has found to do that is by going into the real estate business. The chamber owns four industrial parks covering 3,000 acres. Within these parks, including two adjacent to I-35, are more than three dozen buildings and 2 million square feet of rental space. In a recent \$20 million expansion of the Michelin facility, Ardmore eventually built a distribution center that it leases to the tire company.

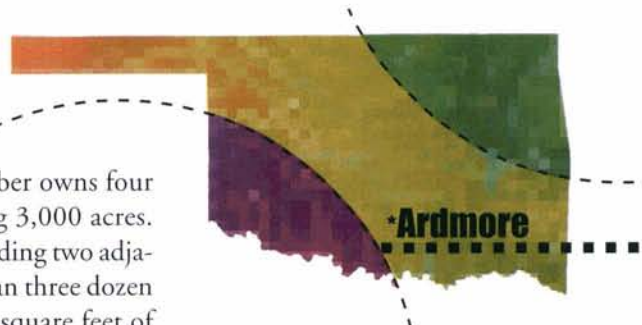
"Companies think this is one of the best ways to expand," he said. "It allows them to expense the lease costs rather than put up all the capital for a new building."

Such deals have led retailers Circuit City and Best Buy to develop distribu-

tion and warehouse facilities in Ardmore. "Many communities will target an industry or a few companies that they want to bring to their town," Stucky said. "Our greatest asset is our ability to target anyone looking for an alternative to Dallas."

Capturing businesses intent on serving the burgeoning market in Ardmore has also aided in cultivating the aerospace industry, with the Ardmore air park as the calling card. Aviation sales and airplane retrofitting draw some of the largest passenger airplanes, Boeing 747s and McDonnell-Douglas DC-10s, to the Carter County community.

"About 10 years ago, at the bottom of the oil bust, we buckled up and got to



work," Stucky said. "We put a major emphasis on diversification. The greater the variety, the better."

Interstate access and innovation form some of the key ingredients in Ardmore's future, but they only come together through vision.

"Our goal is not to announce new jobs, but economic growth," Stucky said. "We want to broaden the economic base."



ARDMORE

DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

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Horses, History, Hospitality.



Arts, Parks & Antiques.



Mix southern hospitality and western heritage with the arts, historical sites and outdoor recreation and visitors will find the ingredients that make Ardmore the hot spot of southern Oklahoma.

Its turn-of-the-century downtown—a **National Register of Historic Places Commercial District**—features brick sidewalks, period street lamps, benches and landscaped islands. It's a great place to stroll while shopping in the boutique, gift shop, antique and specialty stores.

History has also been preserved in the **Greater Southwest Historical Museum**, which recreates a late 19th-century town, and a separate **Military**

Museum with artifacts from the American Revolution to Desert Storm. Doll lovers will be entranced at the hundreds of rare and antique ones at the **Eliza Cruz Hall Doll Museum** in the Ardmore Public Library.

In addition to four art galleries, the **Charles B. Goddard Center for the Visual and Performing Arts** offers concerts, plays produced by the **Ardmore Little Theater** and festivals sponsored by the local arts and humanities council.

For rodeos, horse shows, fairs and other events, check the calendar at the **Hardy Murphy Coliseum**.

Surrounded by eight lakes including **Lake Murray**, Ardmore is an oasis for

water, boating, hunting, camping, golfing and other outdoor recreation. Or, simply play in our parks such as downtown's **Central Park** or the **Ardmore Regional Park**.

When ready for the comforts of home, dine in one of our 30 restaurants and rest in one of the 800-plus motel rooms.

For a community calendar, call:

**Ardmore Chamber Of Commerce or
Ardmore Tourism Authority**
410 W. Main
Ardmore, OK 73401
580/223-7765 • 580/221-5118

www.ardmoreite.com/ardmore/tourism
www.ardmore.org

ARDMORE

A Report To The State Of Oklahoma

OKLAHOMA BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT CONTINUES TO LEAD THE NATION

THE FACTS ADD UP TO A POWERFUL ADVANTAGE

THIS OVERVIEW IS FILLED WITH GOOD NEWS THAT IS THE RESULT OF PROVEN BOTTOM-LINE RESULTS FOR OKLAHOMA BUSINESS. THE STATE'S PRODUCTIVE LABOR, QUALITY OF LIFE AND TECHNOLOGY FOCUS ALL ADD UP TO AN ABUNDANT ADVANTAGE FOR BUSINESSES TAPPING INTO AMERICA'S NEW POWERHOUSE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH.

WHAT SETS OKLAHOMA APART?

TOP 10 WORKFORCE

Nowhere are workers more productive and more quality oriented than in Oklahoma.

TOP U.S. CITIES WITH HIGHEST QUALITY WORKFORCE

1. SALT LAKE CITY, UT
2. MINNEAPOLIS, MN
3. SEATTLE, WA
4. CINCINNATI, OH
5. ROCHESTER, NY
6. OKLAHOMA CITY
7. TULSA
8. BOSTON, MA
9. FORT WORTH, TX
10. PITTSBURGH, PA

*SOURCE: WORLD TRADE MAGAZINE

Top Quality Workforce. More than 900 top business executives named Oklahoma City and Tulsa as two of America's Top Ten cities with a high quality workforce delivering global competitiveness.



If you've lived and worked in Oklahoma, these facts aren't surprising. For firms knowing little about our state this information can point the way to selecting Oklahoma for a business relocation or expansion.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Every day, people are discovering that the real Oklahoma is so much more than they ever imagined.

There's the unexpected physical beauty and little-known geographic diversity, our timeless artistic and cultural heritage. And of course the vitality of our people, the dynamic pace of our cities and the state's always welcoming hospitality.



Others are finding out what we've always known...that life is just more enjoyable in Oklahoma - no huge crowds or dense traffic, many cultural opportunities and a Great Outdoors that is truly great.



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

To My Fellow Oklahomans:

We should all be immensely proud of the impressive gains Oklahoma business has made in the last few years.

These gains are the result of diligent effort on the part of the Oklahoma Department of Commerce, The State Chamber and numerous other economic development organizations. They are directly attributable to significant legislative initiatives that have helped position the state as a viable environment for firms seeking to expand or relocate. And, finally, these gains would not have been made possible without the efforts of Oklahoma businesses. I thank all these groups for their untold hours of volunteer time and their tireless willingness to talk to other organizations who are considering the state for a new site.

So please read the information contained in this report and share it with your co-workers and friends. As Oklahomans, we have much to be proud about.

Sincerely,

Governor

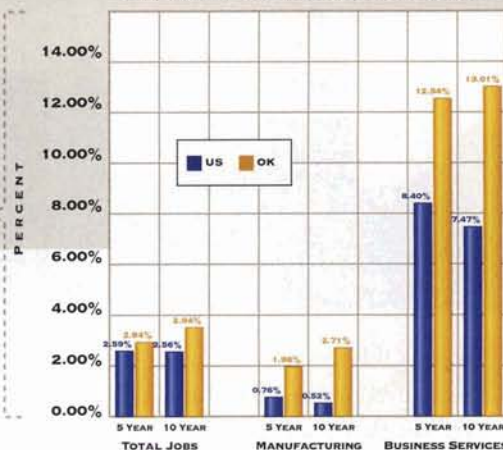


GROWTH

What does economic development mean to Oklahomans? It means a better quality of life. Because, as those new jobs diversify our economy, they also raise our per capita income.

In the last five years, Oklahoma has outpaced the nation in manufacturing, business services and overall employment, earning a Top Ten ranking among the fastest-growing states.

ANNUALIZED EMPLOYMENT GROWTH RATES, OK AND US



SOURCE: US DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

TECHNOLOGY FOCUS

Oklahoma intends to be a significant player in the area of science and technology.

An information-based economy means not only more jobs, but also more opportunities for our best college graduates to pursue professional opportunities in Oklahoma.



From biomedical research gaining national attention in cancer, diabetes and cardiovascular disease, to innovative educational delivery programs in engineering, leading-edge research in semiconductor manufacturing and the award-winning Oklahoma School of Science and Mathematics, Oklahoma is poised to become a key producer in the currency of future economies.

More good news: Economic progress in Oklahoma isn't limited to metropolitan areas. Progressive smaller communities have launched industrial development authorities, built business parks and new buildings, and opened their doors to new companies.

THANKS TO ITS PEOPLE, OKLAHOMA WORKS. AND HAS TRULY BECOME A BUSINESS DECISION WE ALL CAN LIVE IN.

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Bartlesville

Expansions, relocations bring diversity to oil mecca



Many Oklahoma towns started out as oil-boom towns in Indian Territory, but Bartlesville was the first. In 1897, the Nellie Johnstone No. 1, the first commercial oil well in Oklahoma came in, and an oil kingdom was born.

Oil has been very good to Bartlesville, and the corporate presence of international oil giant Phillips Petroleum Company is perhaps the greatest evidence of that fact. The company continues to maintain its world headquarters in Bartlesville. Phillips's presence has provided a firm economic footing for the city, but Bartlesville still has weathered its share of ups and downs, often coinciding with the rise and fall of domestic oil prices.

To diversify its economy and continue to grow, city leaders and residents passed a one-quarter cent sales tax several years ago, earmarking money for economic development. Then, in 1996, the city and the chamber of commerce partnered to form the Bartlesville Development Corporation (BDC) to aggressively pursue economic growth.

"We've been fortunate to have a city council and leaders within the community that understand the importance of economic development and the need to be proactive to recruit and retain indus-

try," said Jim Fram, BDC President and Chief Executive Officer.

In addition to recruiting new business, The BDC has an active business retention and expansion program which monitors the pulse of existing companies. The BDC also loans monies to new

and existing companies based on payroll projections and the number of jobs created. If the company meets projections, the loan is turned into a grant, which doesn't have to be repaid.

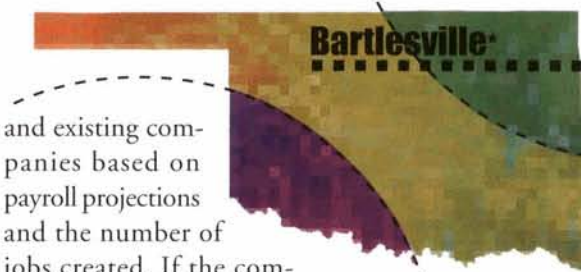
These efforts appear to be paying off. A variety of firms have responded to BDC programs and have relocated to or expanded in Bartlesville. Among manufacturing newcomers to town are Springs Industries, a pillow manufacturer, and Components Manufacturing Company (CMC), a producer of heating and air conditioning components.

Those aren't the only companies to locate or expand in the area in recent years. Superior Companies, a metal

manufacturer, recently announced an expansion that will result in 39 new jobs and an additional payroll of \$1.2 million. The BDC also has been successful in retaining divisions of ABB, a Swiss-based company that designs, manufactures and sells electronic measurement and control systems to the oil and gas industry.

Perhaps the crowning achievement of the BDC, however, is not a project typically associated with an economic development organization. In 1998, the U.S. Department of Energy closed its Bartlesville-based National Institute for Petroleum and Energy Research. The DOE gave the city a choice—either the DOE would transfer the buildings to the General Services Administration, or the city could revitalize them for new businesses. That's what Bartlesville did, and today the complex is home to the national headquarters of the Delaware Tribe of Indians and two oil-related firms, R.L. Clampitt and Associates and TransTech Laboratories Inc.

"Bartlesville is a great place to locate a new business," Fram said. "We really have a diversified economy and a great quality of life. We're also fortunate to have progressive leaders who know what it takes to keep the economy growing. I think our recent achievements are evidence of that fact."



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Lawton Fort Sill

Cultural and economic diversity fuel Lawton Fort Sill's growth

Comanche County is a land of surprises. Nestled in an area that looks like a slice of Montana relocated south is Oklahoma's third-largest city, one of the top Army posts in the world and a vibrant local economy that drives the southwest corner of the state. An inexpensive cost of living and a low-cost business environment, combined with an industrious, educated workforce and an entrepreneurial spirit continue to fuel growth in and around the city

of Lawton Fort Sill.

The area is not some dusty mirage on the Great Plains, but a thriving outpost where cultural and industrial variety continue to shape the future. It is also noted for scenic beauty: the rocky Wichita Mountains form a majestic backdrop to the community.

"There's so much diversity here," said Marilyn Feaver, president and chief executive officer of the Lawton Fort Sill Chamber of Commerce and

Industry. "I'm not sure our own citizens even recognize the uniqueness of our population."

The military presence, which includes the largest field artillery complex in the free world, creates a stable economic component for the area. Fort Sill serves as a conduit for industry and individuals. Not only do military retirees join the local workforce, but active duty personnel and their spouses also provide an infusion of energy and ideas to the community. "It's an incredible plus," Feaver said. "It's such a positive part of the community."

Those newcomers often bring high levels of education and world experience. They then add it to a rich cultural broth that includes Native American, east-Asian and central-Eu-



ropean influences, to name a few. Together, they give the city of more than 100,000 an international flavor. "Once people come to the area, they find the cost of living to be low and the quality of life to be high, and they stay," Feaver said. "Your dollar goes a lot farther here."

Once here, newcomers join a workforce that carries vestigial influences of the area's past. A strong background in farming and ranching, which continues to this day, and the military influence, make Lawton Fort Sill the sort of city where early to bed and early to rise is a way of life.

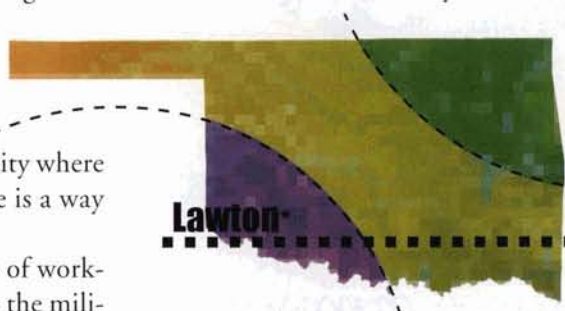
"When you have a history of working on the farm or serving in the military, you get used to getting up early in the morning," Feaver said. "It's not unusual to see the streets busy at 5 a.m. This is the earliest starting community I have ever seen."

Getting a jump on the rest of the world seems to be paying dividends. Feaver said Lawton Fort Sill's growth has kept pace with the national economy, picking up in the last five years as companies have looked for expansion locations. And when companies choose the area, they aren't coming because of lavish financial incentive packages. Yes, the community has inexpensive electrical power, a plentiful water supply, and growth to the east and west, Feaver said, but it maintains the frugality of the people who settled the area when it was nothing more than a hilly frontier.

"We're focused on continual improvement," Feaver said. "When a company comes here, we are looking at what will help them, which will help us in the long run. We've found that a company's number one priority is a quality work force. The exceptionally strong work ethic exhibited by our la-

bor force is one of the reasons that the world's largest producer of radial passenger tires is located in Lawton Fort Sill. Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company has invested nearly a half billion dollars in their facility since first breaking ground in 1977."

The Goodyear plant's nearly 2,500 employees make it the largest private employer in the area, but it is not alone. Cameron University, medical



centers, large retailers and local schools each employ hundreds. The Republic Group recently invested \$175 million to develop a national recycling center that opened in November.

The Crusader Weapons System, a self-propelled howitzer that will replace the U.S. Army's Paladin, will be assembled on the outskirts of the community.

"We have a lot of entrepreneurs here, as well," Feaver said. "There are an amazing number of high-technology companies located in our city. Many of these businesses are developing to serve the defense support industry, but then are diversifying to serve the private sectors as well. In addition, Cameron University has taken a leadership role in developing an environment that is conducive for high-tech business to grow and prosper."

Lawton Fort Sill's position along Interstate 44 allows industry to take advantage of the heavily traveled corridor. The route links Lawton Fort Sill with Wichita Falls and the Texas market to the south, and Oklahoma City and markets to the north and east via

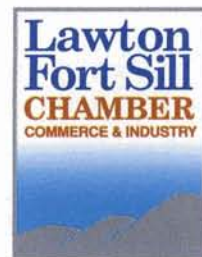
Interstates 35 and 40, Feaver said.

"Another great asset is our airport," Feaver said. "With 8,600 feet of runway, it can accommodate a lot of different aircraft," which is one of the reasons Lawton Fort Sill Municipal Airport is one of the 15 largest employers. Easy access to a mature infrastructure also adds conveniences for people living near Lawton Fort Sill. With four-lane highways connecting to the city from the four points of the compass, it's neither a joke nor a boast to comment that all roads lead to Lawton Fort Sill, Feaver said.

"We think about distance to work in minutes, not in miles," Feaver said. A person living more than 30 miles out of town, for instance, could easily drive into the center of the city in less than 30 minutes, she said.

Besides an absence of big-city traffic headaches, Lawton Fort Sill's quality of life is enhanced by other attributes. The city lays claim to a top-notch symphony, an outstanding historical collection at the Museum of the Great Plains, and the rugged beauty of the nearby Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge.

"Anyone can show you an industrial site or a building," Feaver stated. "But it is things like the philharmonic and the museums that add to the quality of life in a community."



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CALENDAR

Mary Barber of Dover, Oklahoma, is one of ten women portrayed in "Through Our Grandmothers' Eyes: Interviews and Photographs of the Women Who Settled Oklahoma," an exhibit depicting the day-to-day lives of pioneer women during the settlement of Oklahoma. Each over the age of eighty-five, the women were photographed by Jana Birchum in 1989; the exhibit continues to be among the most popular educational programs supported by the Oklahoma Museum Association (405/424-7757). "Through Our Grandmothers' Eyes" will be on display at the Cherokee Strip Museum in Perry from February 2 to 23. Located at 2617 Fir Street, museum hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday. Free admission. (580) 336-2405.

EDMOND

ACROSS THE BOARD

University of Central Oklahoma Mitchell Hall
Jan 12: Richard Scarry's Busytown. Jan 16:
Concert Series—Symphonasaurus. Jan 18:
President's Concert Series—Tap Dogs. Feb 8:
Beauty and the Beast. Feb 18,19: Patricia
Wise—Opera Guest Artist. (405) 974-2513
Jan 1-Mar 11 Varian Fry—Assignment Res-
cue: 1940-41, Historical Society Museum,
(405) 340-0078
Jan 7-9 Eagle Watch, Arcadia Lake, (405) 359-
4573
Jan 21 Oklahoma City Philharmonic Comes
to Edmond, Edmond North High School,

(405) 340-4481

Feb 5-18 Youth Impressions, Community
Center, (405) 340-4481

Feb 20 Frigid 5-Miler Run, Mitchell Park,
(405) 359-4630

ENID

ACROSS THE BOARD

Jan 14,15 Agrifest, Chisholm Trail Expo Cen-
ter, (580) 237-1390
Feb 4-6, 10-12 Eating Raoul, Gaslight The-
atre, (580) 234-2307
Feb 5,6 George Massey, Baritone & Susan
Peterson, Soprano Concert, Enid Sym-
phony Center, (580) 237-9646

Feb 6 Tech Expo 2000, Autry Technology
Center, (580) 242-2750

MUSKOGEE

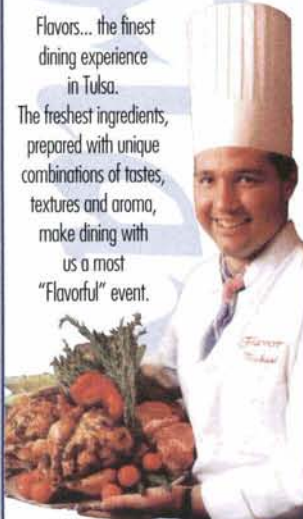
ACROSS THE BOARD

Civic Center 425 Boston. Jan 3-8: Shrine Clas-
sic Basketball Tournament. Feb 21-23: Reg'l
Science Fair. Feb 22: Kiwanis Chili Day.
(918) 682-9131
Fairgrounds 1444 S Cherokee. Jan 1: Bull Ex-
plosion. Feb 11,12: Multicultural Rodeo. Feb
18,19: Local Jr. Livestock Show. Feb 23-26:
County Jr. Livestock Show. (918) 684-6359
Jan 15 Martin Luther King Jr. Day Parade,
Citywide, (918) 684-6359

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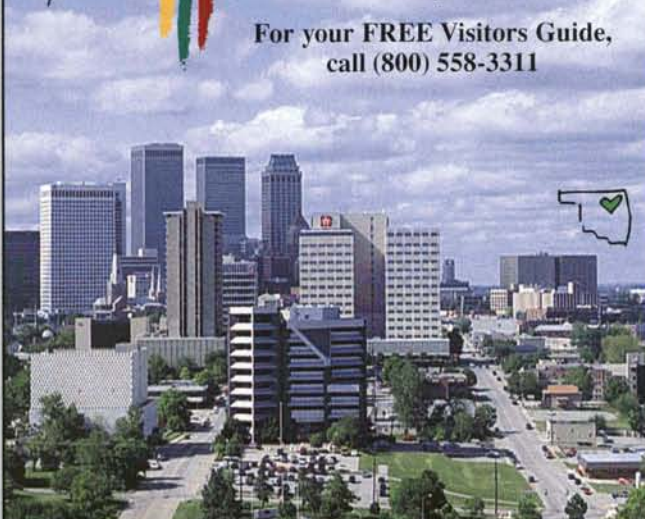


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Photo by Don Sibley

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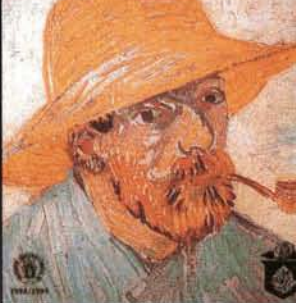


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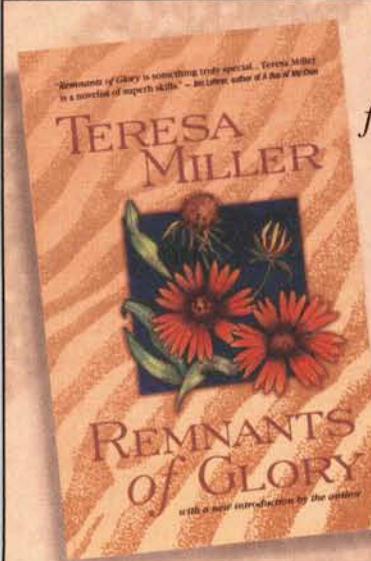
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CALENDAR

Love Is Not Because

Love is not Because
Love is not Although
Not When will it be
Or I told you so.

Love is not Perhaps
Love is not Until
Not I think I may
But I know I will.

—Ruth F. Boorstin

*Ruth Frankel Boorstin is the wife of
Tulsa native and noted historian Daniel
Boorstin. They live in Washington, D.C.*

Jan 29 Art Auction, St. Joseph's School, (918) 683-0932

Feb 4-13 The Curious Savage, Muskogee Little Theatre, (918) 683-4901

Feb 21-27 Motor Speedway Car Show, Arrowhead Mall, (918) 683-4100

Feb 24-27 Seven Brides for Seven Brothers, High School, (918) 684-3750

NORMAN

MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

Firehouse Arts Center 444 S Flood. Jan 8-Feb 13: Alan Burris—Ceramic Sculpture & Leonore Jetley—Fiber Art Exhibit. Feb 19-Mar 19: Charles Lewton-Brain—Jewelry Exhibit. (405) 329-4523

Tribes Gallery 307 E Main. Jan 8-Feb 19: Beading Class for Beginners. Jan 11: Kiowa Cradleboards. (405) 552-3803

Jan 22-March 12 School of Art Faculty Exhibition, Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art, (405) 325-3272

Feb 6-27 First Americans, First Oklahomans: Indian People, Jacobson House Native Art Center, (405) 366-1667

ON THE STAGE

Catlett Music Center 500 W Boyd. Jan 13: Martin Luther King Jr. Day Celebration. Jan 21: Masala Series. Jan 23: Sutton Series—Carolyn Bremer. (405) 325-4101

Sooner Theatre 101 E Main. Jan 15: Melba Moore. Feb 25,26: Sooner Follies. (405) 321-8091

Jan 20-23 Young Choreographers' Showcase, Rupel Jones Theatre, (405) 325-4101
Feb 3-6,10-13 The Little Foxes, Weitzenhoffer Theatre, (405) 325-5321

SPECIAL EVENTS

Jan 1-8 Winterfest, Downtown, (405) 360-1162

Jan 15,16 Antique Sale Flea Market, Cleveland County Fairgrounds, (405) 360-2581

Feb 12 Fourth Annual Doc Tate Nevaquaya Southwestern Gala, Oklahoma Memorial Union, (405) 325-7372

Feb 19 18th Annual Chocolate Festival, OU Commons Restaurant, (405) 329-4523

OKLAHOMA CITY

MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

City Arts Center 3000 General Pershing Blvd. Jan 1-15: Perceptions—Dennis R. Johnson & Patrick Synar. Jan 29-Feb 19: Annual Invitational. Feb 19: Café City Arts. (405) 951-0000

Int'l Photography Hall of Fame & Museum Omniplex. Jan 1-29: Nicholas Orzio's Beginnings—Images of Occupied Japan. Jan 1-Feb 11: Rocky Mountain Alpine Exposures. (405) 424-4055

Nat'l Cowboy Hall of Fame 1700 NE 63rd St. Jan 1-Feb 28: Ralph Russell Doubleday: Rodeo's First Professional Photographer. Jan 15-Feb 28: Winter Camp: Honoring the Legacy—Contemporary Expressions of Oklahoma Tribal Art. (405) 478-2250

Oklahoma City Art Museum 3113 General Pershing Blvd. Jan 1-9: Treasures of Deceit—Archaeology & the Forger's Craft. Jan 20-Feb 28: Roadworks—Photographs & Words by Linda McCartney. (405) 946-4477

Feb 20-Mar 12 Darnell Gepford Exhibition, Norick Art Center, (405) 521-5226

ON THE STAGE

Oklahoma Children's Theatre City Arts Center. Jan 14: Trout Fishing in America—Children's Concert. Jan 15: Family Concert. Jan 27-Feb 11: The Mischief Makers. (405) 951-0011

Oklahoma City University 2501 N Blackwelder. Jan 22: Faces, Kirkpatrick Theatre. Feb 4,5: Shakespeare's Clowns, Kirkpatrick Theatre. (405) 521-5227

Rose State College Performing Arts Theater 6000 N Trosper Dr. Jan 9: Ozark Jubilee. Jan 14,15: Classic Concerts, Folk Tales and Legends. Jan 18-23: Max Morath—Living a Ragtime Life. Jan 26: Statler Brothers. Jan 28,29: Steve Allen/OKC Philharmonic Pops Concerts. Feb 11,12: Italian Influence. Feb 15-20: Annie. (405) 733-7960

Stage Center 400 West Sheridan. Jan 19-23: The Foreigner. Feb 11,12: Winter Tales

Storytelling Festival. (405) 270-4801

Jan 26-Feb 19 Arsenic & Old Lace, Jewel Box Theatre, (405) 521-1786

Feb 4 Life & Times of the Buffalo Soldier—Dinner Theater, Nat'l Cowboy Hall of Fame, (405) 478-2250

RODEO & HORSE EVENTS

Jan 13-15 Int'l Finals Rodeo, State Fairgrounds, (405) 948-6700

Feb 5-Mar 31 Thoroughbred Racing, Remington Park, (405) 424-1000

SPECIAL EVENTS

Myriad Botanical Gardens Reno & Robinson. Jan 21-Apr 30: Plant Odyssey—2000 & Beyond. Feb 1-29: Birdhouse Competition. Feb 5,12,19: Crystal Bridge Tour Guide Training. (405) 297-3995

Myriad Convention Center 1 Myriad Gardens. Jan 1,2: Continental Antique Show. Jan 7-9: Darryl Starbird's Nat'l Rod & Custom Car Show. Jan 13-16: RV Show. Jan 23: Stars on Ice. Feb 11: Blue-collar Comedy Extravaganza Starring Jeff Foxworthy. Feb 18-20: Indoor Fun Fair. (405) 297-3000

Omniplex 2100 NE 52nd St. Jan 1-June 30: Everest at OmniDome Theater. Jan 10-Feb 21: Clean Air Plants. Feb 11-13: Annual Children's Concert. Feb 11-August 27: Remember the Children: Daniel's Story. (405) 602-6664

Feb 17-20 Oklahoma Tackle Show, State Fairgrounds, (405) 943-3800

LECTURES & WORKSHOPS

Nat'l Cowboy Hall of Fame 1700 NE 63rd St. Jan 18, Feb 15: Tuesdays at Sundown. Jan 22, Feb 26: Saturdays for Kids. (405) 478-2250

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—Ruth F. Boorstin

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PONCA CITY

ACROSS THE BOARD

Poncan Theatre 104 E Grand. Jan 21: Harpsichordist, John Paul with Shawn Leopard. Jan 28-30, Feb 4,5: When You Comin' Back, Red Ryder? Feb 18: Byron Berline Band. Feb 26: Oak Ridge Boys Concert. (580) 765-0943

Feb 5 Groundhog Run, Lake Ponca Shelter House. (580) 765-7855

Feb 6-27 Membership Art Show, Art Center, (580) 765-0746

TULSA

MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

Alexandre Hogue Gallery College Avenue & Fifth Street. Jan 21: The Printmakers. Feb 25: Artist Showing—Peng and Chi Sculpture & Painting. (918) 631-2202

Philbrook Museum of Art 2727 S Rockford. Jan 1-Feb 27: Collecting for a New Century: Contemporary Art at Philbrook. Jan 1-Mar 26: The Hollywood Portraits of George Hurrell. Jan 9-Jun 11: Gods, Saints, & Heroes: Prints from the Permanent Collection. (918) 749-7941

Jan 1-Feb 27 Gifts of Pride and Love: Kiowa & Comanche Lattice Cradles, Gilcrease Museum, (918) 596-2700

Feb 1-Apr 16 Needle Lace Exhibit, Int'l Linen Registry Foundation, (918) 622-5223

ON THE STAGE

Heller Theater 5328 S Wheeling. Jan 14: Laughing Matter Improv—Freeze Out 2000. Jan 22,23,27-29: Einstein & The Polar Bear by Tom Griffin. (918) 746-5065

Trinity Episcopal Church 501 S Cincinnati. Jan 4: Organist Michael Bedford. Jan 11: Pianist Barbara Geary. Jan 18: Goodwin-Maher, Piano Duo. Jan 25: Organist Edwin Day. Feb 1: Organist Fred Elder. Feb 8: Pianist Arthur Hart. Feb 15: Organist Bruce Barber. Feb 22: Pianist Amy Cleek. Feb 29: Tulsa Opera Previews—Manot. (918) 582-4128

Tulsa Performing Arts Center 110 E 2nd St. Jan 7,8: Pops III Concert—Ben E. King. Jan 8: Richard Scarry's Busytown. Jan 13: Chamber Classics II. Jan 19,20: Gaelic Storm. Jan 22: Masterworks III—Searals, Allen, & Rivera. Jan 23: Lollipop II. Jan 25-30: Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story. Jan 27-30: Beethoven Festival. Jan 28-Feb 5: Crossing Delancey. Feb 3: Coffee Classics II. Feb 4,5: Pops IV—Marvin Hamlishch. Feb 11-13: Tulsa Ballet—Lady of the Camellias. Feb 11-19: The Glass Menagerie. Feb 12: Alice in Wonderland. Feb 19: Masterworks IV—Robert McDuffie. Feb 20: Trinity Irish Dance Company. (918) 596-7111

Feb 18 Flash Cadillac with the Sinfonia, Pace Theater, (918) 595-7777

RODEO & HORSE EVENTS

Jan 20-23 Longhorn World Championship Rodeo, Convention Center, (615) 876-1016
Feb 12 NEOSHA Horse Show, Expo Square, (918) 251-5788

INDIAN EVENTS

Feb 18-20 Indian Art Festival, Greenwood Cultural Center, (918) 838-3875

FAIRS & FESTIVALS

Feb 5 BabyFest 2000, Convention Center, (918) 596-7177
Feb 26,27 Book Fair & Market, Holland Hall School, (918) 481-1111

RUNS, RIDES, & WALKS

Feb 19 Twelve-Kilometer Walk, LaFortune Park, (918) 481-1718

SPECIAL EVENTS

Expo Square 21st & Pittsburgh. Jan 6-8: Chili Bowl Midget Nationals. Jan 24-30: Boat, Sport, & Travel Show. Feb 11-13: Darryl Starbird's Nat'l Rod & Custom Car Show. (918) 744-1113
Jan 1-23 Bridal Fashions Exhibit, Promenade Mall, (918) 622-5223
Feb 26 Violet Show, Tulsa Garden Center, (918) 746-5125

LECTURES & WORKSOPS

Tulsa Garden Center 2435 S Peoria. Jan 19: Brown Bag Lunch Lecture—Garden Design. Feb 3,10,17,24: Creating a Stylish Garden. Feb 16: Brown Bag Lunch Lecture—Jump Start for Spring Gardening. (918) 746-5125

WOODWARD

ACROSS THE BOARD

Josie Adams Cultural Centre 818 Main St. Jan 1-26: Everything I Say Here Is Straight and True. Feb 10: Have a Heart Auction. (580) 256-7120
Feb 1-29 Fine Arts Competition & Show, Plains Indians & Pioneers Museum, (580) 256-6136
Feb 5 Yesterday—A Tribute to the Beatles, Woodward Arts Theatre, (580) 256-7120
Feb 18,19 Bluegrass Winter Jam, Northwest Inn, (580) 995-3147

OUT & ABOUT

MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

Gardiner Art Gallery Stillwater. Jan 10-Feb 9: Anticipating the Dawn—Native American Women Artists. Feb 14-Mar 22: Julie Green

BYRON FISH HATCHERY

- March 11 – Water Gardening for Wildlife
- June 10 – Fish Management in NW Oklahoma
- July 8 – National Butterfly Count
- Sept. 16 – Bowhunting Certification
- Oct. 28 – An Evening with Bats
- Nov. 11 – Wild Turkey Management

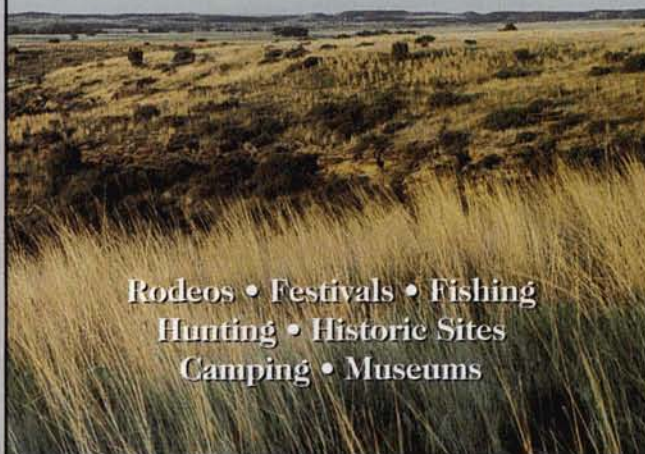


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Saturday,
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9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

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- Guided Eagle Viewing

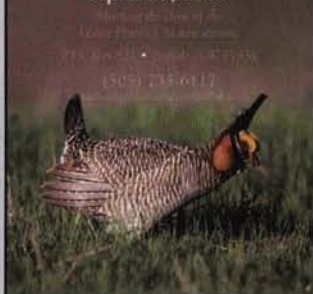
For detailed information and a schedule of events contact the Kaw Lake Association

(580) 762-9494 or
(888) 291-4995
pin# 2920

E-mail: kawlake@kask.net

Buffalo Spring Festival

April 29, 2000



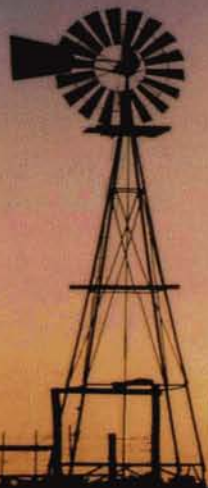
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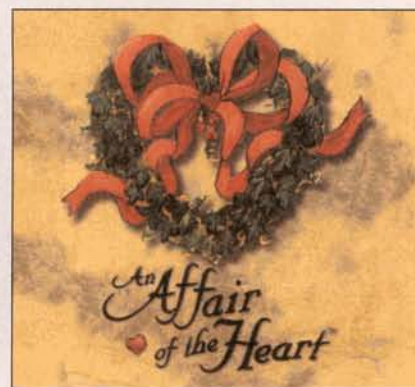
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**OKLAHOMA
TODAY**

THE MAGAZINE OF OKLAHOMA

CALENDAR

Art Exhibition. Feb 14-Mar 22: Patrick Synar Exhibition. (405) 744-6016

Mabee-Gerrer Museum of Art Shawnee. Jan 15-Mar 19: Stitches of Time—A Quilt Show. Jan 22-Jul 9: The Beaded Object. (405) 878-5300

Price Tower Arts Center Bartlesville. Jan 1-9: Bruce Goff—Architect, Artist, & Collector. Jan 14-April 2: Athletes—The Essence of Action. (918) 336-4949

Jan 1-Apr 30 History of the Town Fire Department, Sand Springs Museum, Sand Springs, (918) 246-2604

Feb 2-23 Through Our Grandmothers' Eyes, Cherokee Strip Museum, Perry, (580) 336-2405

ON THE STAGE

Byron Berline's Double Stop Fiddle Shop & Music Hall Guthrie. January 1: New Year's Day Night. Jan 15: Eddie & Martha Adcock with the Byron Berline Band. Jan 29: Byron Berline Band. February 12: Barbecue & Bluegrass. Feb 26: Byron Berline Band. (405) 282-6646

Jan 18 Alice in Wonderland, Center for Performing Arts, Tahlequah, (918) 458-2158

Jan 28,29, Feb 4,5 Pruning the Family Tree—A Dinner Theatre, Elk's Golf & Country Club, Duncan, (580) 252-8331

Feb 4-19 The Octette Bridge Club, Community Theater, Lawton, (580) 355-1600

Feb 10-20 Dial M for Murder, Boomtown Theater, Drumright, (918) 352-2236

Feb 11-19 Proposals, Little Theatre, Shawnee, (405) 275-2805

Feb 11-20 Arsenic & Old Lace, Community Playhouse, Broken Arrow, (918) 258-0077

Feb 11-20 Critics' Choice, Stage Door Community Theatre, Yukon, (405) 681-5263

Feb 17-19 Everyman, Cameron University, Lawton, (580) 581-2346

Feb 17-20,24-27 A Flea in Her Ear, Town & Gown Theatre, Stillwater, (405) 372-9122

Feb 18-20,24-26 Will Rogers Follies, Southwest Playhouse, Clinton, (580) 323-2222

Feb 18-26 Hillbilly Women, Community Theater, Sapulpa, (918) 227-2169

Feb 18-26 Mary, Mary, Community Theatre, Cushing, (918) 225-4141

Feb 26 Hello, Dolly!, High School, Idabel, (580) 286-3305

INDIAN EVENTS

Jan 28,29 Miami Tribe Indian Market and Stomp Dance, Ottawa-Peoria Cultural Center, Miami, (918) 542-1445

RODEO & HORSE EVENTS

Jan 14-16 Triangle Horse Sales, Heart of Oklahoma Expo Center, Shawnee, (405) 275-7020

Feb 4,5 Bullnanza, Lazy E Arena, Guthrie, (405) 282-7433

Feb 5-13 Horseracing, Blue Ribbon Downs, Sallisaw, (918) 775-7771

Feb 27,28 Cherokee County Jr. Livestock Show & Auction, Fairgrounds, Tahlequah, (918) 456-6163

Feb 28-Mar 2 Payne County Jr. Livestock Show & Auction, Expo Center, Stillwater, (405) 377-1275

FAIRS & FESTIVALS

Jan 20-22 Bluegrass Festival, Western Hills Guest Ranch, Wagoner, (405) 273-8578

Jan 28 Mardi Gras, Hardy Murphy Coliseum, Ardmore, (580) 221-5118

Feb 11,12 Chocolate Festival, The Meeting Place, McAlester, (918) 423-9910

Feb 19 Oyster Fry Festival, Prather Brown School Cafeteria, Frederick, (580) 335-2126

Feb 25,26 Fabulous February Bluegrass Festival, Fountainhead Resort, Eufaula, (800) 345-6343

SPECIAL EVENTS

Chisholm Trail Museum Kingfisher. Jan 22: Luncheon & Victorian Fashion Show. Feb 12: Sweet Memories. (405) 375-5176

Civic Center Elk City. Jan 15,16: Western Oklahoma Boat & Sport Show, (580) 243-2484. Feb 4,5: Kiwanis Carnival, (580) 225-0207

Greenleaf State Park Braggs. Jan 15: Winter Waterfowl & Eagle Watch. Feb 12: Sweetheart Party. (918) 487-7125

Jan 1-Feb 28 Eagle Watch, Eagle Nest Cove, Fort Cobb, (405) 643-2249

Jan 3-27 Watercolor Oklahoma, E.T. Dunlap Center, Idabel, (580) 286-3305

Jan 8 American Bald Eagle Tour, Sequoyah State Park, Wagoner, (918) 772-2108

Jan 22 Winter Waterfowl & Eagle Watch, Tenkiller State Park, Gore, (918) 489-5643

Jan 29 Collectibles Show, Parks & Recreation Building, Sand Springs, (918) 246-2561

Feb 6 MRS Chili Cook-off, Community Center, Stigler, (918) 967-4319

Feb 12 Valentine's Dance, Greenleaf State Park, Braggs, (918) 487-7125

Feb 12,13 Home & Garden Show, Great Plains Coliseum, Lawton, (580) 355-2490

Feb 12,13 Trout Derby, Blue River Hunting & Fishing Area, Tishomingo, (580) 371-2175

Feb 24 Chuck Wagon Feed & Livestock Show, Fairgrounds, Perry, (580) 336-4684

Feb 25-27 Oklahoma State Fiddlers Convention, Western Hills Lodge, Wagoner, (405) 789-3850

Feb 26 The Wedding of a Millennium, Expo Center, McAlester, (918) 421-2011

Feb 26,27 AMBUCS Better Living Show, Texas Company Living Show, Guymon, (580) 338-2210

RUNS, RIDES, & WALKS

Jan 15 Greenleaf State Park Walk, Greenleaf State Park, Gore, (918) 481-1718

LIVING HISTORY

Jan 1-May 1 Roll One-Room School, City Park, Cheyenne, (580) 497-3318

Jan 12-May 1 A Day at School, Rose Hill School, Perry, (580) 336-2405

Feb 18,19 Bitter Creek Frontier Daze, Roman Nose State Resort Park, Watonga, (580) 623-7281

Feb 18-20 Civil War Winter Encampment, Jim Thorpe Park, Yale, (918) 225-5860

Feb 24-27 1830's Fur Trade Rendezvous, Fort Towson Historic Site, Fort Towson, (580) 873-2634

LECTURES & WORKSHOPS

Chisholm Trail Museum Kingfisher. Jan 15, Feb 19: Tatting Workshop. Jan 29: Is It Junk or Treasure?—Workshop. (405) 375-5176

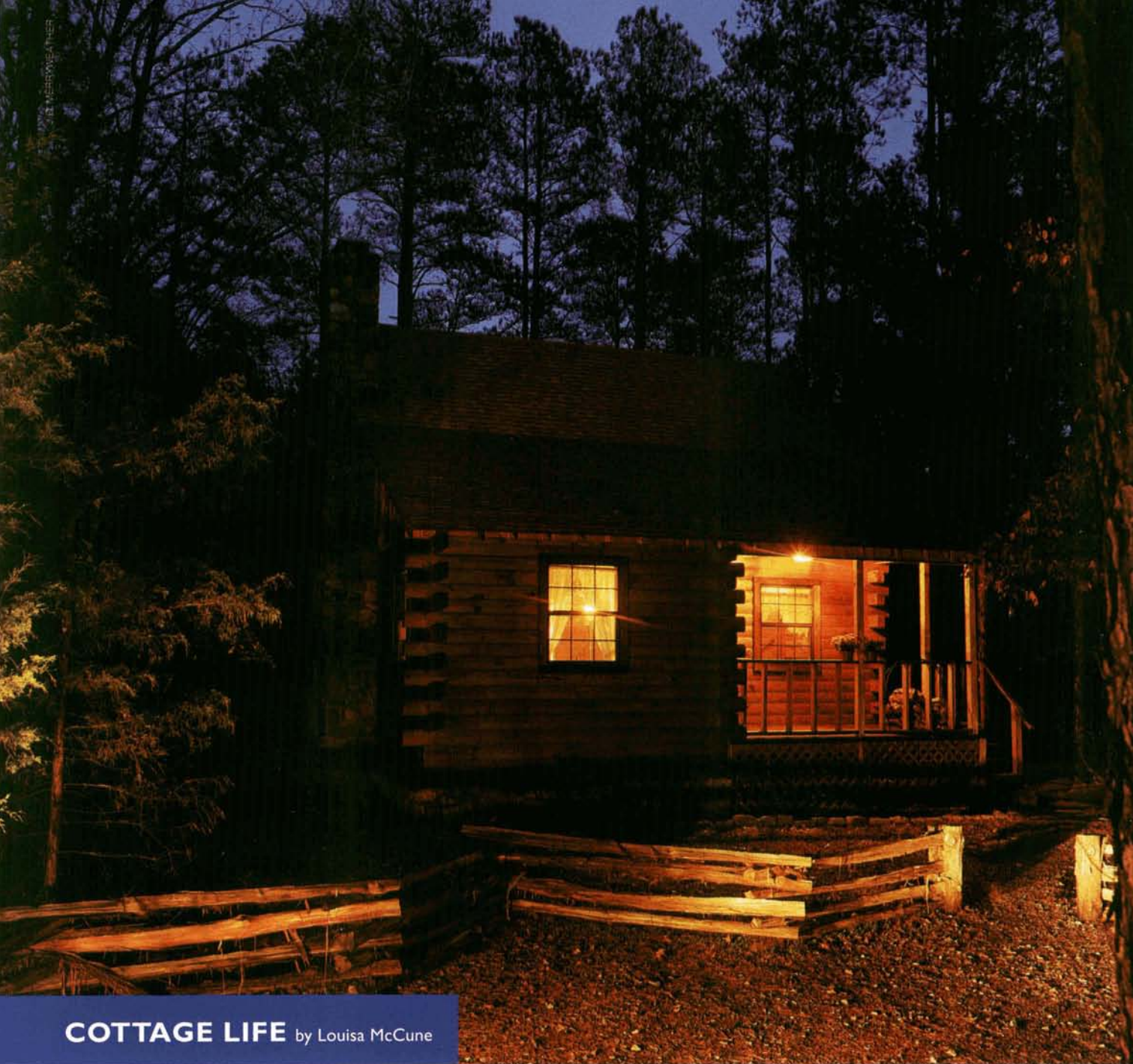
Jan 29 Valentine Workshop & Luncheon, Thompson House, Tahlequah, (918) 457-5587

Feb 5 Victorian Valentine Workshop, Fort Gibson Historic Site, Fort Gibson, (918) 478-4088

For more Calendar listings, visit our website at www.oklahomatoday.com.

Dates and times are subject to change; please confirm before attending any event. The calendar is a free service published on a space-available basis. To be considered, please mail a concise notice of the event (a separate page for each event) that includes date, time, place, address, admission prices, and both a contact telephone number and a phone number that can be published. Notices must arrive at Oklahoma Today three calendar months prior to publication (i.e. May-June events must arrive by February 1). Send to: Entertainment Calendar, Oklahoma Today, P.O. Box 53384, Oklahoma City, OK 73152 or fax: (405) 522-4588; we cannot, however, take listings over the telephone.

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COTTAGE LIFE by Louisa McCune

OF ALL THE WINTER DELIGHTS AVAILABLE TO HUMAN-kind, I would rank the fireplace at least within the top three. I've even begged, pleaded, and now hopefully convinced my mother to avoid trading in the cumbersome old wood burner in favor of a new fangled artificial fireplace. Anyone who appreciates winter for a quality like this cannot afford to miss out on the wonderfully remote and romantic Eagle Creek Guest Cottages near Octavia.

Nestled within the Kiamichi mountain range sit twelve log cabins featuring luxurious king-size beds, large Jacuzzis for two, outdoor charcoal grills, and fully appointed kitchens with everything from coffeepots and salt and pepper shakers to dishwashers and paper towels. If the tube is on the agenda, satellite television and VCRs are provided in each cottage.

The concept behind Eagle Creek is one of privacy and relaxation, therefore, children under sixteen and pets are discour-

aged. "We developed the cottages from our own experience," says owner Jim Smedley. While raising three children near Dallas, he and his wife LaVern—both from the Poteau area—attempted on occasion to escape the pressure of work and parenting but realized there were few exclusively adult destinations. "Only after we bought the property did we realize this was an opportunity to put something together that we were looking for." Nowadays, the Smedleys run their ten-year-old business with son Joe and his wife Becky.

Reservations at Eagle Creek Guest Cottages are required, and rates for two people run \$125 during the week and bump up to \$140 for Friday and Saturday nights (580/244-7597 or www.guestcottages.com).

And the huge stone fireplaces? No need to haul your own wood or bring along the Duraflames—the Smedleys provide loads, with ricks of firewood delivered each day to the porch.

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